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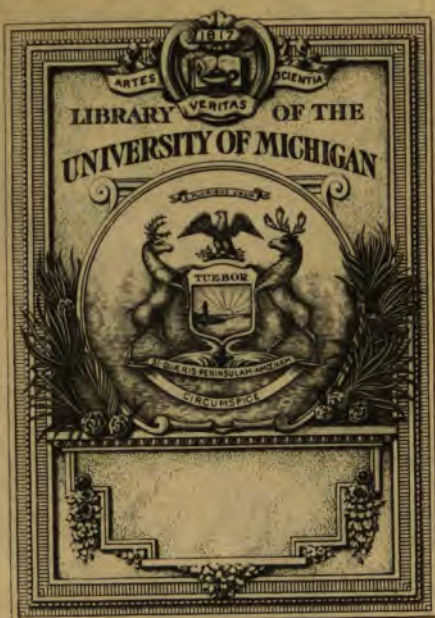
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*Done Mrs. Catherine Grace Francis
= (Moody)*

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THE
CONFEDERATES OF LUBIONKI.

CHAPTER XVII.

How Kingdoms are embroil'd—what shakes a throne,
How the first seeds of discontent are sown,
To spring up in Rebellion ;—how are set
The secret snares that circumvent a state.

SATIRES ON THE JESUITS (1679).

ALTHOUGH the dainty captain had been careful to retain a sufficient portion of his own costume as a protection against the greasy garments of Blazek (which, although a holiday suit assumed in honour of his visit to Lublowicz, were far from calculated to gratify the senses of touch or smell of the fop of Pulawy), he could not refrain from uttering a thousand imprecations against the chance, and the originators of the

chance, which invested him after a fashion so unsuitable and unsatisfactory.

He had soon occasion, however, to congratulate himself on the foresight occasioning so singular a transition in his toilet; for on pursuing his route through the entangled thickets of underwood according to the indications of the clue, he perceived men stationed at intervals along the track, armed with rifles and cutlasses, (as if for the purpose of instant alarm, and summary justice on intruders,) to whom the sight of his gay uniform glittering in the moonlight, must have afforded immediate grounds of suspicion.

“The vermin,—the caitiffs,—the presumptuous and most ill-conditioned dogs!” muttered Konstanty as he picked his way through the brambles: “to think that they should so far emulate the honourable practices of war, as place videts at their outposts!—Behold me in a pretty strait;—about to be hailed,—discovered,—and, without arraignment or court martial, hung up among the acorns of the nearest oak, or shot like a plover or a pee-wit as fair forest game. Well!

—'tis too late to recede; and so a bold gait to make the best of it."

"Kto idzie?"*—cried the nearest peasant in a moderated tone of voice, as soon as he was within hail.—

"Polak!—Swóy! WOLNOŚĆ!"†—cried Konstanty, with assumed firmness.

"Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!" replied the peasant: "Pass on!"—

"Safe for the nonce!" ejaculated the young soldier. "Oh, Nep, Nep,—thou most lumbering and degraded of dunces!—that I should be obliged to prompting of thine for the means of saving my neck from these Philistines! Yet, on my life 'tis a grievous fact to recognize that, instead of each man Jan knowing t'other man Jan for his brother-rebel, they are forced by numbers to have recourse to stratagems of war."—

By seven sentinels was young Felinski successively challenged; and to seven sentinels was his pass-word satisfactory. But the track now presented an almost continuous line of passengers

* Who goes there?

† A Pole! a friend! Liberty!

rendering the guidance of the clue superfluous; and in the two individuals immediately following him, (although he did not venture to turn and confront them in authentication of the fact,) he had little difficulty in recognizing the voices of Erazm, and Henryk the Straznik, with whom his boyhood he had been accustomed to hold communication in the way of his calling.

“And you did positively and of a truth, beat the ground betwixt the Jama and the Lubloyst road, on the day of our last public meeting?”—inquired the young Węglarz.

“Every bush, every briar, every tuft of knot grass!”—replied the forester. “I can swear to the fact;—for I was accompanied by the Panicksko Pulafski with his dog Traszlach, who made fight in the wood with my Lithunian lurcher of the Białówiezki breed; and i’ faith Traszlach shewed rare mettle and breeding in the fray. We fancied indeed that yourself or Matiasz had been beforehand with us;—for at a spot in a line from the Jama we came upon a pool of blood, as though a whole herd had fallen there since morning!—

I could slaughter a wild boar with less effusion."

"Ha!" cried Erazm, suddenly clapping his companion on the shoulder.—"A pool of blood?—Henryk my man, a word, and I am your dog for ever!—Whither tended the track;—and found you foot-prints or hoof-prints round the spot?"—

"Hoof-prints of an ass or mule beside the quarry-lair;—of a horse, on the road hard by."—

"Tending towards Lubloyst or Wodarodko?"—

"These solemn questions might be spoken at the Ratusz by the Grodski, in open tribunal," cried Henryk, laughing. "I had not thought to be so catechized. But in honest truth, I looked not closely on the matter; and can serve you only in guiding you to-morrow to the spot, where your own eyes may be your best instructors."

"Nie, nie!—showers that would overflow the lake of Lubionki, have fallen since; and gore-trace and foot-prints are now with the last year's snow," cried Erazm. "Nevertheless——"

“Hark!” cried Henryk, “We are late, the hymn of consecration begins:”—and, pealing solemnly through the night air, the following invocation now became audible to the advancing confederates.

HYMN OF THE BRETHREN OF THE CROSS.

HOLY OF HOLIES!—Sire,—Son,—Holy Ghost!—
 Creator,—Saviour,—Sanctifier divine!—
 Guard round thy servants with thy heavenly host,
 And save,—oh! save us from our foes and thine!

VIRGIN!—ador’d of earth,—belov’d of Heaven!—
 Sad weeper by the cross!—Blest mother!—Thou
 Unto whose glorious travail-pangs ’twas given
 To free the suffering nations,—hear us now!

ARMY OF MARTYRS,—star-encircled names,—
 Immortal phalanx of the Eternal throne;—
 By the fell scourge,—the rack,—the circling flames,—
 Aid,—aid,—our souls with courage like your own!

ELECT OF GOD!—who, amid earth’s eclipse,
 Vouchsafing light unto your film-seal’d eyes
 Smote with a touch of fire your glowing lips,—
 Hear,—FELLOWSHIP OF PROPHETS!—hear our cries!

Hear us, LORD GOD OF SABOATH—hear! Henceforth
 Blend our Hosannahs with the Seraph’s cry,
 While through the Empyræan vault swells forth
 The diapason of Eternity!—

Before the conclusion of the last stanza, Konstanty, apprized by the encreasing volume of sound of his vicinity to the assembly, approached the last barrier;—a rude log stretched across the path—on either side of which, each bearing a drawn sabre, stood two elders of the confederacy, who extended their hands in a species of masonic greeting. At the moment the young captain approached them, the press of the crowd behind suddenly became so considerable that there was no longer time for the observation of this ceremonial; and, uttering loudly and hurriedly and for the twelfth time, the words “POLSKA I WOLNOŚĆ,” he rushed onwards, giving way to the impetus of the throng.

Even prepared as he was for symptoms of a considerable meeting and place of meeting, Konstanty could scarcely repress an exclamation of amazement at a spectacle that greeted his eyes on emerging from the thicket into the arena. A space of about four hundred square yards was cleared in a tolerably exact parallelogram,—the trunks of the larger forest trees being

laid down at measured intervals, as seats or benches for the elders of the Confederation.—In the centre, a circle of blazing brands, consisting of young pine-trees (the resinous sap of which produced a brilliant flame,) were stuck with regularity into the earth;—and at each angle of the square, was grounded a stand of muskets, which, judging by the nearest, appeared to be of considerable extent. A brawling murmur of voices rose from the assembly at the conclusion of the hymn; and if fumes of Vodka, garlic, tobacco, and greasy rags, might be regarded as indicative of the nature and quality of its heterogeneous members, Erazm and the Węglarze might probably rank among the noblest Szlachta of the Confederates of Lubionki.

But although it would have been difficult to dissipate, even by Turkish fumigation, the malaria hovering over the infected spot, the tumult and vociferation were suspended, as by a magic touch, at the sound of a shrill whistle proceeding from a small platform, raised in front of the blazing brands.—

“Hush! — peace! — silence!” — cried those immediately around Felinski. “Father Dionysius is about to address the assembly: Father Dionysius is about to take up his parable:— Father Dionysius, the St. John of the Zakon Jesuitów!”—In an instant a whisper would have been audible!—But it was *no* whisper,—it was a strong, clear, sonorous, manly voice, that now rose upon the air; and, though the figures of two or three interposing members of the Confederation prevented Konstanty from discerning the person of the speaker mounted on the platform, he could readily detect that it was a man of education as well as intelligence,—a person belonging to a different grade from that of the miserable Chlopstwo by whom he stood surrounded.

“MEN AND BROTHERS,” said he, with the distinctness of enunciation indispensable to the technicalities of oratory: “Were I not already assured that our assembly is convened at this hour, in this spot, under the sanctification of God for an effectual purpose of benefit and amelioration to a suffering household of his

children,—methinks the solemn excitement of addressing so vast a confraternity of my fellow-creatures and fellow-countrymen,—would have inspired me with the great and glorious project of their release from the bonds of the oppressor. —That, in a Christian country, all men born to the inheritance of light and breath should be born to their *free* exercise and enjoyment, is a thing peremptorily in the order of nature; and even while we resent, we cannot marvel at the imputations cast by the nations of Western Europe upon the Ancient Equestrian Republic of Poland, that, being free, she entertaineth not free followers in her household;—but degradeth herself by participation in the Scythian barbarism of her neighbours of the Wolga;—rearing one chosen child of her offspring in her bosom, and trampling the other in the dust under her feet. But if the scorn of the enlightened be justly excited, most unjustly doth it fall as regards the origin and result of such abuses. England and France, my brothers,—in the levity of their prosperity and gratuitous enjoyment of the mighty

blessings of freedom, — are said to lavish their contempt upon those who brandish the scourge and rivet the collar of bondage, rather than upon the abject fool who lends his body to the lash. Yet but for the servile self-resignation of the serfs of Poland their independence had long since been achieved; and instead of the gashes inflicted upon the bosom of Sarmatia by the marauding hordes of Muscovy, each one among her loving children would have been already engirded with the national sabre, to brandish in her defence, as the flaming sword of the cherubim at the Gates of Paradise! —

“ But the day of deliverance is fully come! — Ye who, in filial submission to the example of your fathers, have borne with patience the yoke, the scourge, the moral annihilation, the physical privation, the bitterness of bondage, the slavery of thankless labour; — ye, who have patiently resigned yourselves, — your wives, — your helpless children, to the tyranny of the oppressors; — ye are at length roused to rebut the despotism of those who have lifted an unrighteous hand against the Ark of the

Covenant!—The soul of the people is astir. He, who sent forth a mission of redemption to mountain and plain,—centurion and soldier,—sovereign and slave,—proclaims a second advent—even the coming of FREEDOM to the bondsmen of the human race.—And lo! the chains of feudalism are loosed! — Other countries have already thrown off the yoke;—and Poland herself at length rebels against the fetters forged by her domestic despots—in alliance with foreign enemies and faithless to the cause of the holy Mother Church,—minions of the Tzarina, and upholders of heretics and Dissidents.”

“Jesuit!” muttered Konstanty, between his teeth.

“I call upon ye, therefore,—Brethren and fellow-countrymen!”—continued the orator, “to unite in firmest resolve against the forgers of your chains.—Behold! I bring ye glad tidings. In Lithuania the Brethren of the Holy Cross have already mustered, in enregistered confederation, to the amount of four thousand souls,—four thousand able men; in whose hands, the aid of friendly

succours from Italy and France have placed arms for the defence of the good cause.—Within a week from this auspicious night, similar assistance will be granted to such among ye as shall apply, singly and with discretion, to the Superior of the Zakon at Lubloyst, or at the suburb dwelling of Szmuhl the Jew.—For, behold, the day of strife is at hand. The anointed king laboureth with a sore distemper ; and before the acclamations of the Vola resound in honour of a new chief of the Republic, — the people, yea, the PEOPLE of Poland, shall claim their share in his election.

“ Now, even now, is the appointed time!—These wolves of Warsaw, these giants who grind your bones and make mockery of your anguish, are quailing beneath the frown of enemies greater than themselves.— The Saxon Brühl and his satellites tremble under the scorn of Muscovy ; and Fritz of Prussia, and Krim Gueray have already crushed with their iron gauntlet the fair possessions of the Magnats of the frontiers. Strike, therefore, while disquiet is upon their souls. Raise the war cry in their ears, while they are yet listening for the

trumpets of the invaders. Make your grant of liberty, your investiture with a voice in the Diet, the price of allegiance to their banners;—and should they *still* refuse concession, speedy be the struggle and mighty the victory!—

“Brethren!—I leave ye for a time. The confederations of Volhynia and Podolia claim my care. To them I bear glorious intelligence of your strength, your courage, your firmness, your brotherly regard. And for you, I bequeath ye to the guardianship of a good and watchful shepherd; to whom to make known your grievances or prefer your claims, is to speak them in the ears of your patron, the Captain who watcheth over the good cause.”

“Mystic and mountebank!”—muttered Konstanty to himself. “In the good shepherd I can readily read the name of Joachim:—but this patron and Captain?—why speaks not the villain plainly?”

His hopes of enlightenment on this important point were however frustrated; for at the close of the “Vivats,” which now rent the

air, another voice became audible; even that of Ignacy, deputed by his brethren of the confederation to reply to the address of the Jesuit of Grodno.

“It were my duty to express the thanks of the Brethren of Lubionki to their great champion and his delegate the good Brother Dionysius,” said the old man in his rough voice and uncouth idiom; “but the thought that God who is above us, their master and our own, hath sowed the good seed in their hearts, teaches me to tender the words of our gratitude to the Omniscient alone. Brother! it is meet that we prove ourselves worthy of the trust reposed in us. Be it told, therefore, in ensample and boast to our confederates of the South and our confederates of the North, that amid the fraternity of Lubionki no evil word, no strife of envy jealousy or mistrust, hath yet arisen.—Behold!—we have one heart,—its sole hope, FREEDOM;—one soul,—its trust—the LORD OUR GOD. Our strength is girded on:—speak but the Hourra of onslaught, and the struggle begins!—Ere again we meet, O

Brother! a weapon will be in every hand: and thou shalt know the word one is wanting to call them into action. Brothers of the Holy Cross!—shout mightily to Heaven for Freedom and for Polska!”—

Although a weak and selfish egotist, Konstanty Felinski was by no means destitute of animal courage; or of a warmth of spirit that caused the blood to boil in his veins while listening to these vauntings and menaces, without the power of reply or defiance. It was clear from the peal of acclamations which rent the air at the conclusion of Ignacy's harangue, that the meeting must consist of two thousand persons or even more; and while marvelling at the extent of influence which could unite a congregation of such extent in the thinly populated district of Lubloyst, he was compelled to admit the urgency of forbearance and quiescence on his own part. His resolution was already taken. Without the delay of a day, an hour,—without waiting for rest or refreshment, an interview with his father or a visit of farewell to the mansion of Salomea,—he would

away to Warsaw for an instant conference with Prince Czartoryski; ere he proceeded to lay the important intelligence of which chance had rendered him master, before the Rada or Permanent Council. Not a minute was to be lost: he would ride express to the camp: and, to do Konstanty justice, all idea of his own advantage or aggrandizement was lost in the enthusiasm of the service he supposed himself about to render to his country.

While these plans were rapidly combining in his mind, great portion of the speech addressed by Father Joachim to the assembly was lost upon Felinski. He heard enough, however, to convince him that, if inferior in authority to the Delegate of Grodno, the Jesuit of Lubloyst was more subtle in his arguments, more ingratiating in his address, more powerful in his eloquence. A long residence among his auditors enabled him to enter with greater precision into their sentiments and inclinations; and invested the confederation of Lubionki with more importance in his eyes than in those of one accustomed to address the more numerous and influential congregations of Lithu-

ania. Father Joachim contrived moreover to mingle in *his* discourse, (in the way of laudation and example,) the names of many leading members of the confederation: a circumstance which served the purpose of revealing to the amazed Felinski, that the majority of his father's boors were enrolled in the cause!

The concluding branch of the Jesuit's discourse regarded the dissolution and dispersion of the assembly. "The moment is critical," said he. "Be therefore more than your usual circumspection observed in returning quietly, singly, and separately to your homes. Precipitate not yourselves towards the path, lest by widening and trampling the track, ye draw down upon our clearage the notice of the Hayducks or others, foes to the confederation of Lubionki. Let him who is nearest the wicket issue first; each following in rotation without outcry or contention."

By this arrangement, Konstanty was debarred of all possibility of outstripping his companions. To approach Ostronimptszch in search of Blazek,

in company with one or more of the confederates, was to betray himself at once; and even the alternative of regaining Lublowicz on foot. the circumstance of his strange disguise could not but transpire; and by causing an alarm in the country, might tend to instigate precautionary measures on the part of the rebels.

“Tis good, they say, to have a friend at Court!” mused Konstanty, as he followed the train marching in single file from the clearing to the Lubloyst road. “But I have a friend elsewhere who shall just now better serve my purpose. Happy for me that the sudden arrest of the woman Salomea left my purse of ducats again at my disposal;—and if with that, and the interest of pretty Rozetzka to boot, I persuade not mine host of the Karczma of Lubloyst to secrecy, the loan of the best horse in his stables, and the most decent pelisse in his wardrobe,—gold and eloquence must be of little account in Lubloyst, considering their scarcity in the kingdom in general. If the fellow wax not morose on being haled out of his straw in the dead of night,

I may reach the next post-station by daylight, and the camp before this hour to-morrow. And then, should Master Michaëłowski persist in giving his daughter to an enrolled traitor of the Lubionkian confederation instead of bestowing her upon one by whose zeal Mazowsze,—the kingdom itself,—may be preserved from insurrection, 'tis plain that there is no longer gratitude in man or Mazur."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Were she the abstract of her sex for form,
Were there no rose, no lily, but her cheeks,
No music but her tongue,—virtue but hers—
She must not rest here!—

THE KNIGHT OF MALTA.

THE day succeeding this momentous night was one of unparalleled interest and excitement in the district of Lubloyst.—The perambulators of the Rynek were struck still by a redundance of foreign and domestic intelligence;—strange rumours were afloat;—a tribunal was sitting with closed doors at the Ratusz under the presidency of the Grodski; and messengers were passing between the farms of Lublowicz and Wraniczko as though one

or both habitations were in a state of conflagration. It was known that the Zydowka Salomea, wife of the rich Jew, was under arrest; — it was rumoured that Konstanty, son to the rich farmer Felinski, had disappeared mysteriously from the country;—and although testimony was borne by the inhabitants of the Jewish suburb that strange noises had been heard throughout the night in the dwelling of Szmuhl, yet when at their prompting the premises were visited by the Hayducks of the Grodski, not a human being was visible! —Vainly did the occupants of the adjoining houses protest that the loud outcries of a man had been heard, from midnight till day-dawn; and that at one moment the shrieks of a female were also audible.—When at length two of their number were admitted in deputation by the indulgence of the Predco, the multitude was compelled to admit that the whole affair was the effect of imagination or magic; — for lo!—nothing was found in the house indicative of recent habitation, but a lamp that must have been extinguished at an early hour of the night;

and a disordered bed, — probably occupied by Salomea at the moment of her arrest.—

The only person capable of solving the mystery was, in fact, deeply interested in screening the truth from detection. Nepomucen Pulafski, who, startled from his purpose of badger-baiting at Ostronimptszch by the events of the night, mingled about noon with the gossips of the Targ, took care to acquaint himself with the rumours of the crowd, and assist in magnifying the terrors of which he was the unsuspected cause.

Surprised by his non-appearance at the Puszcza meeting, and recalling anxiously to mind that the lubber had never followed him through the secret passage from the cellars of Szmuhl, Father Joachim no sooner arrived at the Friary than, quitting the venerable Dionysius his guest, he proceeded by the vaulted corridor to the Jewish habitation. Day was already dawning when he lifted the tapestry of the sleeping chamber; where the first object that met his eyes was the figure of Doska (who, having risen from her couch, was attempting to

array herself in her usual attire that she might make some effort in pursuit of Konstanty,) and the first sound that greeted his ears, the roaring of Nepompcen. With some difficulty, the Jesuit succeeded in removing the chest and unbarring the door to release him from his duranee; but to obtain a rational explanation of its motive and origin, was a still more difficult task.—

“Never believe me, good brother,” cried he’
“but as I was about to comply with your injunction last night, and make speed to bear you company through the ammunition-cellars to the forest, a—monster,—a fiend,—a demon with the strength of fourteen bisons of the Bialowiezka Puszcza,* set upon me, belaboured me with blows, seized me by the toplock of my skull, and pitched me head-foremost yonder into the street-room, to hawl through the night like some unclean spirit in the pangs of purgatorium.—Never believe me but it did.”—

“In faith, thou lookest scared enough to have been somewhat roughly handled!” said

* A forest in Lithuania where the Bonassus is still found.

the priest, scarcely able to repress a smile at the uncouth consternation of young Pulafski.—

“Did you never hear it whispered father,” said Nepomucen mysteriously, “that Heathens, Tatars and other dogs of misbelievers, when they want a sure guardian for hidden treasure, spill on the spot the blood of a slave whereof the ghost may haunt and guard their pelf?—Never believe me but the buffets I received in the dark were given by the spirit of some unlucky christian, feloniously slain by the Jew Usurer to become sentinel over his ingots, and the arms of the confederacy deposited in the vaults beneath his dwelling.”

“And this damsel?” inquired Father Joachim, leading Nepomucen by the sleeve into the inner chamber. “What hath *she* to do with watching over the gold of the Israëlite, or the cold iron of the Lubionkians?”

“Saints!—Marya!—Chrystus!”—cried Pulafski, startled by the wild and picturesque beauty of Doroska. “’Tis a spirit in right earnest.”

"Enveloped in glowing flesh and blood, I suspect," said the Jesuit, regarding with a peculiar sneer the dark-browed damsel who, now fully arrayed in her fanciful juggler's costume, stood scornfully observing their movements.

"'Tis she who was once Doroska, daughter to our brother of the cross, Ignacy the Węglarz," cried Nep. "Five years ago, her spodnica and fartuch were found floating in the Vistula hard by the farm of Lublowicz; when 'twas rumeured by idle tongues that the damsel had flitted with a troop of rope dancers to go in quest of her light of love, Konstanty Felinski. But her brothers swore—(and most men knew better than to gain-say the oath of Erasz and Matiasz—roisterers and blusterers as they are!)—that she was seen by the rafts-men to throw herself into the river; and never believe me, father, but in passing the spot at twilight, many a time and often since, I have fancied to catch the echo of her death-scream."

"I have heard this tale maundered over by the stove-side of a winter's night," said Jo-

achim; "but dreamed not ever to behold living evidence of its falsehood. Damsel!"—he continued, addressing himself sternly to Doska, who was clinging to the bed-side, as if to gain strength for trials yet to come. "How comes it that thou spakest not last night to make known thy presence—wherein thou heardest us over securely communing?"—

"Because I disdain to parley with traitors and breeders of sedition," replied the impetuous girl; over whose head and shoulders hung a richly embroidered Persian shawl, whose picturesque folds served to conceal the traces of her recent wound.

"Truly a saucy ghost!" cried Nep, beginning to throw off his apprehensions, and approaching nearer to the sprite.—

"At least thou deniest not having been an eaves' dropper on our interview?"—

"What right has such as thou to denial or affirmation at my lips?"—she replied, casting on young Pulafski a glance of scorn which sent him to the further extremity of the chamber.—

“The right of a strong arm over a weak one;—the reverence due to a minister of the church from one whom we have seen and known as the wanton companion of some filthy Israelitish poltroon,—such as he who last night practised unlawfully upon the person of this young gentleman, a free citizen of the Republic.”—

“’Tis false!” cried Doska, irritated out of her self-control by a taunt on the honour and credit of Konstanty. “He whom last night ye chased (ill omened birds that ye are!) from my chamber, was noble, free, valiant;—a sworn foe to plotters and ruffians, whether of the Szlachta or Duchonstwo of Mazowsze.”

“Indeed?” cried Joachim, a suspicion of the truth darting into his mind. “Yet why should we doubt *his* distinction whom we find lurking in the homestead of Szmuhl the usurer,—in the arms of a Bohemian juggler or charcoal-wench of Lubionki?”

“Knavish priest!” cried Doska, in spite of her debility, stamping her little foot impetuously on the floor,—“thou had’st not dared insult me thus in the presence of Felinski!”

“Gramercy at least for thy candour!” said Joachim sneeringly. “This confirmation of my suspicions affords me also a hope that I may find in the lady Doska,—the tumbler — Chimpanzee,—tree-climber,—wilkolak,*—a valuable hostage against the day of defeat. Therefore, good Nepomucen, since thy dread of apparitions is happily at an end, prythee lend me thy aid to transplant this contumacious damsel to the cells of the friary.”

“Ye dare not!” cried Doska, snatching a szabelka from her belt, and putting herself into an attitude of defence. But the burly Joachim, prepared for the movement, rushed forwards and disarmed her ere she gained space or power to strike; and seizing her in his arms, and bidding Nepomucen look to the door ere he finally deserted the scene of his disastrous imprisonment, he made swift way with his burthen along the vaulted passage, suppressing by force and intimidation her violent outcries.

“Truly a most vociferous phantom!” cried

* Forest Phantom.

Nep, following them at some little distance. "Never believe me but she whines like an otter, when hard pressed upon by my dog Traszlach!—I marvel whether the boors up at the farm have had thought or diligence to give the poor hound his night-mess during my absence?—Traszlach must have missed me rarely."

"Lend me thy sash, Nepomucen!" said Father Joachim, as he emerged from the entrance of the vault, and rejoined his ghostly companion in the cloister; (the priest having set down his lovely burthen in a niche of the stone wall, where she was deprived of all power either of escape or resistance.) "I find the damsel too lithe of limb and positive of will to leave her at liberty, even in the cell to which for the present I am fain to consign her." And taking from Pulafski the Pas or scarf he untwisted from his waist, the priest proceeded to bind it over the crossed arms and bosom of Doska, so as to leave her no further liberty of mischief either to herself or others. In vain she wept, and threatened;—in vain she pleaded sickness,—debility,—to which the feebleness and at-

tenuation of her person bore ample testimony. Deaf to her utmost eloquence, Father Joachim, lifting her gently from the niche, bore her along the corridor; and, pushing open with his foot an empty cell belonging to one of the absent Brethren of the Order, laid her almost insensible on the wooden pallet. But while he was yet occupied in moistening her lips with a cordial hastily fetched from the little laboratory of the brotherhood, he was summoned to the grate by a loud demand for admittance.

“Niech będzie pochwalony Jezus Chrystus!” cried Piotr, the herd boy, as Joachim (the lay-porter being still asleep in his lodge,) went forward to receive his humble obeisance. “The good master of Lubłowicz greets your excellent reverence well; beseeching you to ride towards the farm so soon as your duties permit; being fain to parley with your wisdom in behalf of his son”—

“The young Captain?”—hastily enquired the priest, reverting to the adventure of the preceding night.—

“The young scholar!” said the Chłopsko.

"Things are sorely amiss at Lublowicz. This night have we watched vainly for Captain Konstanty, and grievingly for Juliusz. The one comes not home from his lewd carousings,—the other goeth hence to a better land."—

"Heavenly mercy !" cried the Jesuit, unconsciously crossing himself, (for the craft of his vocation aside, he dearly loved his young disciple.) "This then was the cause of his absence from our meeting, while I, in my evil interpretation, accused him of abated zeal ! Be off, lad ; — back to the farm ;—I shall not loiter in my errand."

And having dismissed the boy, he returned to the Refectory, where Nepomucen, with much gesticulation, exaggeration, and mystification, was disturbing the morning meal of Father Dionysius with a romance grounded upon the wonders of the night.

"Were it not wise that thou shouldst hasten home, young Sir, so soon as thou hast taken needful food and repose?" said the Jesuit, touching Pulafski authoritatively on the shoulder. "Thy protracted absence may produce surmises and in-

quiries; and Konstanty Felinski's suspicions are perhaps already excited."

"And what is doing or to be done with the Weglarz-wench, good father? It were an ill thing that she should lie yonder in a Dominican cell, starving and blaspheming in the heart of a Christian community?"—

"She will be cared for!" said Joachim, in no humour to submit to the interrogations of the lubber. "And for thyself, Nepomucen, look that no word transpire of the transactions of the past night. Return not to the abode of Szmuhl without my sanction; and if thou must needs go ruffling, dicing, and cock-fighting among the ruffians of Ostronimptszch, do it with the knowledge that youth and vigour may not long secure thee from the reckoning of thy great accoupt.—Thy friend Juliusz Felinski is dying at Lublowicz!"—

"Juliusz?—*Juliusz*?"—cried Nepomucen—his uncouth visage paralyzed with consternation, "my friend *dying*?—Matko Boża!—I had sooner lose father—mother—and land:—never believe me, Brother Joachim, but I would give up all my

earthly belongings (Traszlach and all) to do him service. When will the signs wonders and misfortunes of the times be at an end !"—

"When the vials of wrath are exhausted !" responded solemnly said Father Dionysius.—And anxious in the mean time to repair the exhaustion caused by his oratorical efforts of the preceding night, he filled his mouth with a double portion of smoked Finland Pech-fleisch, and proceeded to wash down the dainty morsel with a flagon of Bisamberger wine; while Father Joachim hastily quitted the apartment to depart on his mournful errand.

CHAPTER XIX.

How would she open her despairing eyes,
And from the sense of that long lingering day
Rushing upon her, almost turn away,—
Loathing the light, and groan to sleep again :
Then, sighing once for all to meet the pain,
She would get up in haste and try to pass
The time in patience, wretched as it was.

LEIGH HUNT.

Is it to be attributed to the fitful freaks of destiny, that so many an inhabitant of "life's low vale,"—so many a person apparently born for no higher purpose than to bear from the cradle to the grave the chilling burthen of mediocrity,—is summoned to the execution of the noblest duties,—to the ordeal of the most afflicting trials,—to the proba-

tion of the most cruel sufferings,—to the perfectionment of the most ennobling virtues?—

The young girl of Wraniczko, —bereft in earliest childhood of her mother and finding in the neighbourhood of home no matron of her own degree to assist, by precept or example, in the formation of her character or acquirement of the duties of her sex,—had been left to the instruction of her pedantic father, and the brotherly love of Juliusz Felinski ; who, till he became a scholar of the Zakon Jesuitów, made it his delight to profit by the limited library of Wraniczko and the preception of its master, only in the view of inciting by his industry and application, the studious disposition of Mineczka.

But if books of written knowledge were wanting to complete the education thus irregularly begun, the wisdom that is from above was showered in glorious abundance upon the ignorance of Michaëłowski's daughter !—Early initiated by her father into the mysteries of the Christian faith, her interpretation of the revealed oracles of God was enlightened by an intense and never-

ending, study of all other gifts of his bestowing. Mineczka was a wanderer of the fields,—a ranger of the woods and valleys,—a studier of the stars,—a contemplator, doating as the wise man of Judæa, of every herb and every flower that blows. Her father's house was prosperous. There was nothing degrading or vilifying in her mode of housewifery; and between the happy consciousness of duties diligently performed, and these habits of sylvan meditation, the tone of her mind, and even manners, assumed a pure and graceful simplicity—an *élégance*—not to have been exceeded by the pomp-seeking daughters of the highest Magnat of the land. If *power* of mind were wanting,—she was young,—unread in the iron page of worldly experience,—and, above all, she was trained in habits of strict submission to the will of an opinionated and narrow-minded parent.

But all these gleams of sunshine had suddenly disappeared!—The golden eggs were broken in the nest;—nay—she was even about to be driven forth from its holy shelter to a desolate and

barren wilderness,—which she could not sanctify by the precious name of home. Her father and old Pulafski,—between whom a gradual coldness had been springing up, — were unexpectedly moved, by the Wodarodko festival, to renew their intimacy and devise the immediate fulfilment of their engagements; and even Juliusz himself,—the trusted brother on whose regard she had so long leaned for support, had suddenly become as a broken reed,—an enemy, or at best a most misjudging friend.—Young, inexperienced, without example, without counsel, and required to make her election between wedlock with one she detested, or perpetual immurement from the sweeter charities of life, Mineczka, in the holiness of her solitude and purity of her soul, decided on the adoption of the Carmelite habit. But she understood the extent of the sacrifice, and was fully aware of the blessedness of the heart-thrilling domestic joys she was resigning. The dreams of her leisure, —the wanderings of her solitude,—the hills, the forest, the flowing Vistula, the brook with its

painted weeds, and, above all, the image of Konstanty,—were to become, henceforward, interdicted idols. An iron girdle was to be imposed on the pulsations of her warm and nature-loving heart; she must abandon all,—father—home—lover—and devoted household,—for monotonous forms of rigid and unmeaning devotion;—exaggerated penance, and all the heartlessness of pious egotism!—

Such was the state of her feelings—a barren waste, dread with the chillness of winter,—when Konstanty's avowal of love wrought a miracle of spring-like bloom and fragrance from its utmost desolation. Even when she had been happiest, *his* tenderness was wanting to complete the brightness of her prosperity: but now,—*now* that she was miserable, the day-spring shone upon her darkness like the glory of the descending angel in the apostle's dungeon.—She was beloved; and every other fear, every other pang, was forgotten!—

Was it likely that, after so startling a transition, Konstanty's inexplicable absence should

be borne with patience?—Scarcely had she quaffed the cup of perfect happiness, when the empty vessel was snatched from her hand.—*Again* the flowers seemed withering around:—*again* the verdure of the fields was extended as a blank before her eyes:—*again* she smote her breast and felt herself fated to the anguish of unceasing sorrow.

“That the storms of life should reach me even here!” she cried, as with a pallid face and fevered lips, she stood overlooking the fair pastures of Wraniczko;—“here, where nothing seems to interpose between God and his creatures;—where, to cultivate, enjoy, and be grateful for the fruits of the earth, appears the sweet duty and easy destiny of the lord of the soil and his offspring! Yet in what are the daughters of kings more miserable, more distracted, more beset with temptations than I,—a poor Mazurkan maiden?—God counsel me!—God aid me!—for, of a surety, without his helping hand, my soul will perish!”—

The preceding night had been a dreadful one.

Soft, summer-like and fair with moonlight as it was, Michaëlokski's daughter sat counting its weary minutes as in the fearfulness of a wintry hurricane. Blazek had never returned;—and Szatzka having watched in vain, had ventured forth at day-dawn to his cabin among the sheep-folds, and brought back intelligence of his prolonged absence! Nay, ere the terror of this discovery subsided, the messenger dispatched by Felinski to Wodarodko to require an immediate visit from Czelenszki's physician, paused on his road to enquire whether the young captain had made his appearance at Wraniczko, and to impart tidings of his brother's grievous indisposition. Michaëlokski was abroad in the fields; and his daughter had now to endure, uncounselled and unconsolated, the apprehensions arising from this double announcement. She doubted not that her lover had met with some fatal mischance; she doubted not that the friend she had so long and faithfully treasured was lost to her for ever;—and, having wandered forth helpless, hopeless, and distracted, as we have described,

suddenly discerned the welcome figure of Blazek, ascending towards Wraniczko.

“Speak!” said she. “Speak, speak!”—as the boor, prostrating himself before her, tendered his salutation. “Hast seen him?—hast heard tidings of him?—and wherefore returnedst thou not last night from Lublowicz?”—

“With the gracious mistress’s leave, I did,”—replied the vassal, touching his leg in lowly salutation.

“Yet gavest no tidings of thine errand?”—

“With the gracious mistress’s leave, I came to seek tidings here.”—

“Here?—Did not Szatzka require of thee to visit thy kinswoman Katarzynka, that, (God pardon my hypocrisy,) thou mightest learn of the welfare of Felinski’s sons?”—

“With the gracious mistress’s leave, I did all these things and more; and it was the task and trouble of that *more* which caused me to absent myself from the fold, and will surely bring me into sore strait and disquiet both with Wojt and Ekonom.”

"I will excuse thee, good Blazek, to my father."

"But will the gracious mistress excuse me to the Grodski and Predco of the Ratusz of Lubloyst?—and will the gracious mistress take on herself the blame that (Captain Konstanty having strangely and suddenly disappeared,) I, even I, am chargeable with having last seen him, —last spoken with him, —and been presently found in possession of his horse and his accoutrements?"—

"Blazek!"—

"That the holy saints had but been mercifully pleased to put courage in my soul, when I encountered him on the plain yonder at Ostro-nimptazch, so I might have refused to obey as his serving man one who was no master of mine! What but mischief could be in the wind, that a gay young gentleman should be dressing himself up in the Futro of a peasant—(my best Futro, sure enough),—to go ranting about the country as they do in the Jarmark of Lubloyst, at fair time or Carnival!"—

“Konstanty Felinski array himself in garment of thine, — Konstanty? — Blazek! — some wicked mystery lurks in all this!”

“So, with the leave of the gracious mistress, have I said to myself ever since I parted with my Futro; — for what should he want with my Futro, unless to do that under its hiding which would have been unbecoming to a habit of his own?” —

“And *where* and *when* was this?” enquired Mineczka.

“At midnight, hard by the Puszcza; — and were it not that at day break I still found his horse under me and his pelisse over my shoulders, with the gracious mistress’s leave, I should have fancied I had been made the sport of a wilkolak!”

“And said Felinski nothing in explanation of his proceedings?”

“So little, madam, that (with the gracious mistress’s leave,) I conceived the Captain was bound on a courtship-errand to Wraniczko, and had no mind for the boors or the Szlachcic to espy him in his visit.”

"Rode he then *hitherward*, my good Blazek?"

"On what should he ride, when I have already told the gracious mistress that he left his horse under my charge?—and why *hitherward*,—when I have already declared that he set off, as though a herd of wolves were baying at his heels towards the thick of the forest."

"The forest—the thick of the forest!" cried Mineczka, "so far then at least have we track of his course."

"An evil one, as it would seem, gracious lady," replied the herdsman. "For when (seeing that the Panenko returned not to claim his property), I visited Lublowicz some two hours past, and demanded speech of the good master, — Pan Felinski, grew well nigh distraught on learning that the Captain had made off towards the Jama, and never re-appeared. Truly, has the good gentleman cause for vexation;—one son fever-stricken and dying; — and t'other murdered or worse by the haydumacka of the Puszcza. Word has long been current in the country that

a ruffianly spirit was lurking about Lubionki."

"And having changed garments with thee," enquired Mineczka, growing paler and paler, "Felinski quitted thee on the highway, and has been heard of no more?"—

"With the gracious mistress's leave, exactly and truly so."—

"On, Blazek, to the farm," continued she faintly, "and remain within call, that should my father wish to question thee thou mayest not be wanting."

And as the herdsman plodded slowly upward, toward the mansion-house, Michałowski's daughter, with tremulous steps, and a fainting heart, followed him at a distance. The whole world appeared receding from her; she felt as if,—but for some desperate effort, on her own part,—all that she loved would be wrenched from her; all to whose affection her life had been attached,—all on whose future tenderness her hopes had caused her to lean somewhat too fondly!—It was fortunate that on entering the hall she encountered

with her father, ere the desperate resolution she had taken had time to melt away.

“Girl!” cried Michaëłowski, as she entered, with a degree of sternness arising from consternation at the evil tidings already beginning to spread at the farm,—“whence comest thou?”—

“Father!” cried she, falling on her knees and clasping her hands towards him,—and the tears streamed down her marble cheeks with the effort that restored her power of utterance,—“Father—father! have pity on me! Judgments are abroad in the land; tempt, oh! tempt not the rigour of the Almighty by hardening thy heart against thy child.”

“I harden not my heart against thee, my poor Mina,” cried he, raising her from the floor and clasping her in his arms, where she clung and clung in exquisite tenderness and grief. “It is thou who art willing to say Farewell to the parent that for nineteen years hath fostered thee in his bosom, rather than overcome thy repugnance to the homeliness of feature of poor Nepomuk.”

"It is not of that repugnance or that bridal I have now to speak," said she,—the anguish of her soul impressing itself on every quivering feature. "But take me hence, father,—take me to Lublowicz. Juliusz Felinski is laid upon a bed of sickness,—Konstanty has disappeared, and as it is believed, by violence. I have parting words for my kind—kind friend: I have tears to weep for one who would willingly have blest me with the name of wife. Take me to Lublowicz!"—

"Is this maidenly?"—cried Michaëłowski, startled by the excess of her emotions; but drawing her towards the open casement, that the air might fan her cheek, while he placed her as in their happier hours upon his knees, with her brow resting on his shoulder. "Felinski must be in sore affliction; and would scarcely welcome us in such an hour of anxiety?"—

"From whom would he seek solace if not from her who so loved his sons,—whom his sons so loved? Take me father, take me to Lublowicz."

"I will proceed thither," replied her father

compassionating her distress: "and bring back, at my utmost speed, intelligence from the farm."

"Father, father!—I have no fortitude for suspense," cried she. Leave me here, and I shall die of the beating of my over-tasked heart."

"Calm these perturbations," cried Michaëlowski, growing seriously alarmed. "I will instantly away."

"And *I* will follow," cried Mineczka, throwing off all further reserve. "Alone,—unattended,—foot-bleeding,—heart-bleeding,—will I perform the journey!—Restrain me not—forbid me not! A father's voice is peremptory:—but a cry still more peremptory is stirring in my soul,—even the voice him who should have been my husband: and who for *my* sake adventured among the haydumacka of the Puszcza."—

A loud tumult in the offices suspended the words on her lips. The remonstrances, menaces, and imprecations of Michaëlowski's boors, assembled for their noon-day meal, were loud in the affray: but above them all rose the shrill cries of Szatzka.

"Ye shall not have him,—ye shall not take him!" cried the indignant damsel. "He is innocent—Blazek is innocent!—He went not forth of his own will, nor on his own errand: and what motive had *he* of strife or enmity against the young Captain?"

"The temptation of a purse stored with one hundred golden ducats!" replied a hoarse voice, which Michałowski had little difficulty in attributing to Karolek the chief Hayduck attached to the service of the Grodski of Lubloyst.

"Had any evil chanced to the young gentleman at *his* hands, think ye that Blazek would have made instant way to Lublowicz to deposit the garments and horse left with him? Pretty ministers are ye of justice, to be caught in a cobweb! I tell ye, were the case reversed,—had the Panenko been found possessed of Blazek's garments, (Blazek, the poor herdsman, having been missed from the country or even found gashed, bleeding, or dead by the way-side)—ye would have as soon dreamed of citing the King of Poland himself to your blood-seeking

Ratusz, as of accusing young Felinski of murder or mischief!"

"Perhaps so, pretty maiden; since, as thy betters know, it needs for a citizen of the Republic to be taken in the act and convicted by the ocular evidence of four nobles, his equals; ere arrest can be made good on his person. But for this boor of the Wraniczko estate, he must away with me."

"This must be looked to!" cried Michaëłowski, relinquishing his daughter's half fainting form, and rushing forth to interrogate the Hayducks touching the misdemeanour of his vassal. "Injustice shall not work wrong upon a serf of my lands."

"And I must tarry here, and listen to the threats of the avengers of his blood!"—cried Minieczka, pressing her hands to her ears, lest she should chance to hear some declaration on the part of the officers of justice corroborative of her own worst suspicions.

But in another minute poor little Szatzka was

weeping at her knees, imploring aid and intervention.

"The gracious mistress knows," cried she, "that 'twas for *her* sake only Blazek undertook this errand:—that he had no thought to visit Lublowicz or go forth into the Puszcza, but at *our* bidding and intercession.—Speak for him, speak for him!—they are strapping him to a Hayduck's horse to carry him off to justice!"

"And if they *are*, dear Szatzka," cried the young lady, "the poor fellow has done no wrong, and no wrong can be done unto him. Fear not! There is hope while there is life. But for Konstanty——"

"These men have authority for what they do," exclaimed Michałowski, hastily re-entering the room;—"but I will accompany them to Lubloyst to see that no false swearing prevails against the fool Blazek; and return quickly and with good tidings. Szatzka, look to thy young mistress!"

Mineczka would have spoken—remonstrated;—but voice was denied her: And in a few mi-

notes the sound of the measured tramp of the Hayducks' departing troop-horses warned her that they were already on their route to the Ratusz.

CHAPTER XXI.

When he speaks,
Tis like a chime a mending ;—with terms unsquared,
Which, from the tongue of roaring Typhon dropp'd,
Would seem hyperboles.——

SHAKSPEARE.

It is not from disrespect towards the high office and estate of Pan Dzieduszycki, the honourable Grodski of Lubloyst, that he has been hitherto withheld from the reverence of the reader. We have waited to introduce him upon the scene in all the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious office ; to pourtray him surrounded by his guard of Hayducks, and other functionaries of his microscopic empire.

Had he been less than supernaturally dense

of intellect the worthy Grodski could have scarcely failed to acquire some small proportion of fools' wisdom,—the wisdom of experience;—during the thirty-and-two years he had reigned over the liberties of Lubloyst,—castigated the backslidings of its citizens,—and refrigerated by his edicts the hot blood of the foresters of Lubionki. But his Worship (a blessing bestowed by Count Brühl upon the Polish subjects of his Saxon master) was a man more addicted to the fragrant weed than to study of men or books.—He never read,—never listened,—and was only secured from the shame of exposure by a third negation,—he never *talked*;—the pipe which constantly engrossed his mouth was at least useful in saving him from the unlawful exercise of his organs of speech. Phlegmatic as a Dutchman, his despotism was as undemonstrative as the fatal but invisible progress of dry-rot, and like Schiller's grand Inquisitor, he had grown old in the silent enjoyment of cruelty and oppression;—but the abject servility of his nature had placed him high in esteem with the Starosts and Kasztellans

of the Waivodat. The dungeons under the Rynek of Lubloyst told no tales; and were serviceable in sparing a world of words to the taciturn minister of justice, to whom was consigned the custody of the keys of their iron-bolted doors.

But woe to those whose sins against the law compelled the Grodski to remove the pipe from his mouth, for purposes of investigation and condemnation!—

The night that witnessed the forcible seizure of Salomea the Zydowka had not, as announced by the Predco presiding over her arrest, produced so unprecedented a contingency as the prolongation till midnight of the sitting of a tribunal at the Ratusz. It was the policy of the stealthy Grodski to execute the more odious functions of his office as far as possible under the cover of darkness; and the woman had been arrested in her own suburb when there was least probability of outcry or resistance, and thrown into a dungeon for the night, only that he might examine her at his leisure at the earliest hour of morning. What mattered the

sufferings that might arise from darkness,—choke-damp,—or the slimy clinging of the reptiles to her hands and face;—was she not a miserable Zydowka?

Had the Grodski been at the pains to consider the character of his prisoner, he might have been tempted to a different mode of procedure. Salomea was of a different order of spirit from those with whom he was in habitual contact; and though his Worship had often found cold, hunger, and isolation produce an advantageous effect upon contumacious captives,—bringing down the tone of their minds and voices to a decidedly minor key,—he was accosted by Salomea, on her appearance at the bar of the tribunal, with a vociferation of rage and menaces, such as, during his thirty and two years of Grodskihood, had never before greeted his ears;—denouncing him as an unrighteous judge—a despicable man,—and the most hoodwinked of Grodskis and fathers!—

“To tear me from my household home, by the violent hands of constable and hayducks, and thrust

me into a hole swarming with water-newts and creeping things unclean!"—cried she. "Was *such* treatment fitting reward,—oh! wacpan of a Grodski,—for one in whose book of debtorship stand the names of your three gawky daughters, for fard — beauty-washes — and pomander, — enough to have tricked out all the stage-players of Warsaw?" —A nod from the Grodski brought the staff of the Hayduck smartly across her shoulders in interruption of her harangue.

"Ay, smite!" she cried, as soon as the surprise and pain of the blow gave leisure for words. "Smite — scourge — incarcerate — hang — anatomize! — for with such arms do the oppressors perpetuate their rule over the land.—Strike again!" she exclaimed, turning towards the grim Hayduck by whom she had been chastised, "strike till the bones crack under your Batog; or till the stagnated blood blackens the mangled flesh under your blows.—I shall not feel it;—not a pang or ache will penetrate the marrow of the poor old withered Zydowka:—blessings for once on your icy dungeon-depths, which have paralyzed her aged limbs!"—

The Hayduck cast a wistful glance towards the chair of the Grodski, in expectation of a second nod, authorising another official hint to the recusant. But his worship gave vent to his wrath in a voluminous puff of smoke; and kept (if not his temper)—his peace.

“Speak dotard!” cried Salomea, losing all sense of fear or shame, in the desperation of impotent rage. “Hast brought me here a prisoner of state, only to see thee sit nodding thy head like some pagod of pottery-ware among the trinkets of our warehouse;—or puffing forth thy reeking breath, even as”——

But the Hayduck waited no longer the mandate of his master. Nothing doubting that his zeal in defence of the honour of his Majesty’s and the Republic’s constituted authorities would sanction the irregularity, he inflicted a second and double measure of punishment upon the frantic Zydwka.

“I would, knave, thou wert less gentle in thy admonitions,” cried Salomea, turning to the Hayduck, with a countenance involuntarily flushed

by anguish, but distorted by a forced smile of exultation. "Trample me in the dust,—into dust, if thou wilt;—for I tell thee that every grain thereof—were it fine as the dust of the idols cast of old into the brook Kedron,—shall arise and testify against thee."—

"Keep thy breath, brawling woman, to answer his worship's interrogation," said the Hayduck; familiar with all the movements of his superior, and perceiving that the pipe of the very worshipful the Grodski was within a puff of extinction.—And according to his anticipations, he now received a signal inducing him to plant the prisoner immediately opposite the judgment-seat, where a strong light from the lofty windows fell full and accusingly upon her face; while himself and an assistant placed themselves closely on either side, so as to obtain ample mastery over her movements.

"Salomea!—wife of the Zyd Szmuhl, of the town of Lubloyst, in the Palatinate of Mazowsze," said the Grodski, having carefully wiped the clinging moisture from his grisly mustachioes

that his enunciation might be as dry as the words it conveyed. "What manner of man was he who, yesternight was a se'nnight, brought and deposited in thy dwelling a prodigious bale of contraband goods,—tobacco, as it would appear, or kermes, or wax, or spices (as future search of the premises will determine,) of sufficient account to warrant the return of thy spouse from a journey undertaken, in order to preside over its secretement or distribution?"—

To this preamble, Salomea replied by a sneer of bitter and withering contempt.

"I ask thee what manner of man?" persisted the Grodski.—

The prisoner was still silent; when the Hayduck, again instigated by a signal of authority, seized the brawny arm of the Jewess, extending it forcibly to receive a further measure of Batog strokes—

"The secret is scarce worth waste of labour," said Salomea, scornfully—"Keep the strength of thy arm for the infliction of heavier punishment on some weaker victim."

"What manner of man, then?" cried the Grodski, suspending the work of his familiar.

"A manner of man weak, paltry, and ruthless as thyself," replied Salomea, without attempting to withdraw her arm from the grasp that now relaxed in its pressure. "Like thyself, a dog fed with the crumbs apportioned to be the children's bread;—like thyself, the shadow of a puppet, set up by the senate to scare the crows from their corn;—like thyself——"

"Name and define not," said the Grodski, apparently hardened to her taunts. "I require facts, not opinions."

"Thou didst ask what manner of man, or my ears as well as thy lips are liars," cried the audacious woman, eager to pay back in bitterness the pain she had received in the flesh.—

"I amend my speech then;—what *man*?—Whence came he,—whither went he?"—

"He came from doing the work of Satan, thy master and his;—and went back, for aught I know or care, to receive the wages of his labour!"

"And his name?"—

"Look over the muster roll of thy brethren in iniquity, and see which of them was absent from his post."—

The Grodski had been wise enough to remit the punishment of Salomea's foul-mouthed insolence, but he was not prepared to pardon equivocation that threatened defeat to his purpose; and this time, several sharp and well distributed blows caused the chamber of the tyrannous tribunal to ring as with an echo of the mirth of fiends.

"And *now*, what name?"—

"The name of a double-dealer and knave," cried Salomea, "since in accomplishment of *his* artful designs, I doubt not I am brought hither."—

"His name?"

"Curse on *it* and thee," she exclaimed, grinding her teeth with the intensity of hatred.—" 'Twas the minion of the Czartoryski,—Konstanty Felinski."—

"Konstanty Felinski!" shouted the astonished Grodski, in so loud a key that the accents reached the ears of an individual who had just applied a

key of office to the lock of the Justice-hall, and was approaching the tribunal.—

“Who speaks of my son?—who knoweth aught of Konstanty?”—ejaculated the Farmer of Lublowicz, taking his place on a seat at the left hand of the Grodski, appropriated to the elders of the district. “This woman! is she not Salomea, the Zydowka?”—

“With submission to our good friend, Eustachy Felinski,” said the Grodski, swelling like a turkey-cock, “we are now in course of examination and may not be interrupted. The forms of the Court of the Ratusz are imperative.”

“Talk not to me, I pray you, of forms,” said Felinski,—but rather excuse my lack of courtesy, that I greet you with no common forms of greeting. You, a father, and my friend of so many years, will admit my claim to indulgence.—Juliusz, my boy, lies dying:—Konstanty, my son, has mysteriously disappeared.”

“Chrystus!” exclaimed the Grodski, who had long fixed an eye upon both to become his sons-in-law. “How is all this?—The Zydowka here

is in the act of accusation against the young Captain as a smuggler and law-breaker; and you say he has escaped the ends of Justice.”—

“The ends of Justice!” cried Felinski, peevishly.—“That I did but know where to seek him and bring him forth in refutation of such idle calumnies!”—

“Complaints tendered to a tribunal of the Republic, cannot be termed an idle calumny,” observed the Grodski.—

“Meanwhile, let me pray you to hasten the dismissal of this wretched woman, and grant me the aid of a few Hayducks for the purpose of visiting certain recesses of the Puszcza, where I have yet hopes that my son may be forcibly detained.—The Jama of the Węglarze—the——”

“What should the young Captain be doing at the Jama?” inquired the Grodski. “Years ago, the tale ran that his heart was enthralled by the sparkling of a black diamond;—but the wench, if I remember, thought fit to wash off the stain of her grimy vocation by a plunge into the Vistula?”—

"Jest not *now*," said the unhappy father. "Have mercy on my anxiety; and grant me warrant of arrest against Ignacy the Węglarz, and his sons!"—

"You are positively bent on searching the Jama?"

"I am."

"Spare your pains:" suddenly interrupted the Zydowka.—"The gilded toy you tender so dearly is not so far to seek."

"What means the woman?" exclaimed Felinski, approaching her. "If you know aught of Konstanty's absence and abiding place,—instantly acquaint me with your intelligence."—

"Another night or two passed in the dungeons of the Rynek," replied Salomea, with the most vexatious deliberation, "may incline me to oblige you."—

"Pan Grodski!" exclaimed Felinski. "You hear her!—she mocks the judgment-seat,—she disrespects this presence and tribunal."—

"Say rather that she practises upon your

own anxiety," replied the man in office. "Before your entrance, I found occasion to teach her a lesson of reverence to *myself* and *my* authority."

"Look you!" said Salomea, (the care of her own safety overcoming even her desire of revenge.) "You have captured and imprisoned me on false pretences, during the absence of Szmuhl, my husband, to my great suffering and disparagement; and it were but righteous dealing on *my* part to contribute in return my mite to the augmentation of your trouble and disquiet. But I will deal with you as becomes a generous daughter of Judah, treating with false-hearted Christians. I *know* your son's place of retreat!—I beheld him face to face, last night, where, I warrant him, he still tarries."—

"Ha!—speak then"—cried Felinski—"Whither must I seek him?"—

"Softly!—we must first assign terms of mutual obligation."

"Name them—name them!"—cried Felinski.

"Speak!" said the Grodski, authoritatively.

"Speak rather *thou*," replied Salomea. "'Tis only on thy promise of instant enlargement that I will satisfy this man."

"And thou dost pledge thy word, on penance of chastisement, that the man who was noted to visit thy wretched dwelling at the stated hour on the stated night, was none other than Konstanty Felinski?"—

"Even so!"

"And that, on condition of being set at liberty, thou wilt acquaint us with his place of retreat, that he may himself answer to the charge?"

"Again,—even so!"

"What security have we for her fulfilment of the contract?"—cried Felinski. "This woman may send us moonraking to the lake of Lubionki;—herself, meanwhile, escaping from detention."—

"Fear nothing on that score," mouthed old Dzeduszycki. "The strong arm of *our* authority will not fail to reach the Zydowka, wherever she may please to betake herself."—

"Fear nothing on that score!" repeated Salomea; "for I will myself remain here, as hostage,, till the farmer of Lublowicz returns with the young man, his son."

"So near that he may be instantly sought and found?"—

"I guessed as much!" cried the Grodski. "Did we not behold him on the very day of his arrival at Lubloyst, parleying and dallying with pretty Rozetzka the Karczma maiden?—Go to!—neighbour Felinski!—thou hast been over-fearful."

"Who talks of Rozetzka?" cried the Zydowka contemptuously. "Get ye to the dwelling of Szmuhl my husband, in the suburb; and *there* shall ye find—"

"My son?"—

"Parleying and dallying with his paramour the mummer of the Jarmark,—the daughter of Ignacy the Węglarz."

"Great God!" exclaimed Felinski, clasping his hands. "Doroška still living?—That were repayal for all my vexations!"

"Wretch!" cried the Grodski with a gesture of menace at the Zydowka, "darest thou thus audaciously avow in my presence the evil practices and usances of thy miserable dwelling?"—

"And wherefore not?—Why should the laws and law makers who have heaped infamy on our tribe, marvel that they find a Zydowka infamous!" said Salomea, with a bitter laugh.—

"We trifle," cried Felinski.—

"What hast thou better now to do than seek thy son according to her instigation?"—said the Grodski.—

"Spare me the mortification of such an errand," replied the farmer, "by deigning to despatch the Hayducks of the Ratusz to the mansion of the Zyd."

"With all my heart.—I have my own objects to forward in the discovery. Go!" continued the Grodski to the constables by whom the Predco had been accompanied the preceding night. "Make entry anew into the Zydowka's habitation, and bring hither the young Captain Konstanty."—

"A ducat of Holland, if thou art successful,"

said Felinski to the chief Hayduck, as the company of constables quitted the justice room — And such was the origin of the visit, which the inhabitants of the Jewish suburb attributed to their own representation of the strange noises heard throughout the night in the dwelling of the Jew usurer.

During the anxious moments of their absence, Salomea was alternately subjected to examination by the Grodski touching the bale of contraband goods; and by Felinski, touching her knowledge of Konstanty and his proceedings, and more particularly the renewal of his connection with Doska the daughter of the Węglarz. But Salomea, absorbed in terror lest the domiciliary visit of the Hayducks, — which she had little anticipated, — should lead to a discovery of the vaulted passage and the mighty train of interests and mysteries with which it was associated, could not be brought to utter a coherent reply. — She knew that the safety of the Confederation of the Holy Cross depended on the blindness of the officials; — and kept silence, even from good words!

CHAPTER XXI.

He stalks up and down like a peacock—a stride and a stand : ruminates, like an hostess that hath no arithmetic to set down her reckoning ; bites his lip with a politic regard, as who should say there were wit in this head an 'twould out. And so there is. But it lies coldly in him like fire in a flint, and will not forth without knocking.—

SHAKSPERE.

It may appear strange to those acquainted, like our readers, with the existence of the secret connection between the dwelling of Szmuhl the Zyd and the Zakon Jesuitów, that it could be overlooked by the officers of justice dispatched to survey the premises. — But be it remembered that they were commissioned only to bring before the tribunal of the Ratusz the persons of Captain Felinski and his female companion, without specification

of further duty;—that the two chambers,—the street-room and the inner,—were precisely in the same condition they had been left on barring up the doors after the arrest of Salomea;—and that hangings of arras were of common occurrence in the better order of Jewish habitations.

“We found all quiet and solitary in the dwelling of Szmuhl,” said they on their return to the Ratusz from their bootless expedition; “all as we ourselves left it yesternight. No Felinski,—no damsel was there. The Zydowka, for some evil purpose, has beguiled us with false intelligence.”—

“She has mocked us with idle mockery!” cried old Felinski, his anxieties recurring on this disappointment of his hopes.

“She has trifled with our authority!” cried the Grodski.

“She has lost us our double ducat,” muttered the Hayducks.

“Alas!” cried Salomea, wringing her hands, —“*who* so great a sufferer by his escape as

myself?—Behold! do I not remain bound in the hands of the Philistines?”—

“You persist then, wretched woman! that my son *was* there?”—

“By the God of Abraham, Izaac and Jacob, I swear to you that the youth stood under my roof-tree;—last night, within half an hour of the ringing of the curfew.”—

“Under your gracious worship’s pardon,” said the chief Hayduck, addressing the Grodski, “this woman lies in her teeth. The doors and shutters of her dwelling did we close last night, sealing them with the signet of the Ratusz; which seals we found, erewhile, unbroken and untouched. No man can have found issue from the house since she quitted it.”

By this declaration, the whole truth was of course made manifest to the Zydowka. She entertained no doubt that Doska, during her seeming insensibility, had become acquainted with the secret of the subterranean passage; and on the alarm of the preceding night had pointed it out to Konstanty as a means of escape

for both. How far the grand mystery of the Confederates of Lubionki might have been involved in the discovery, she could not, indeed, conjecture; but aware of the multitude of lives (including her husband's and her own) dependent on the maintenance of the secret, she resolved to resign herself patiently to captivity, rather than utter another syllable to endanger the safety of the conspirators. A very short time would bring back her husband from Lithuania, and secure her release;—for between Szmuhl and the Grodski there had long existed secrets of traffic and connivance, whose disclosure would be almost as important to the well-being of the man in office, as that of the Confederacy of Lubionki to the Palatine of Mazowze.—Like the convicted Iago, therefore, Salomea obstinately closed her lips against all further disclosures; although the fervour of Felinski's prayers for information, and the fervour of the Grodski's threats of castigation, might have moved a woman of only common obstinacy.

“I have nothing more to tell!” said she

in reply to his menaces. "Ye cannot press oil from a stone; ye cannot extort confession where there is nought to confess."—

"At what hour, saidst thou, he was with thee in thy dwelling?" enquired Felinski.

"I have said it—and will say no more."

"At what hour said she?"—persisted Felinski, turning to the Hayducks.—

"If your excellency pleases," said he of the Batog, brightening up with a renewed hope of winning the double ducat, "within some minutes of the fire-bell;—nor could it have been much later, for the chime tolled out as we crossed the Rynek with our prisoner."

"Then idly have I lost my time!" cried Felinski — "for two hours later was my son seen to enter the Puszcza."

"Ay?" — involuntarily ejaculated the Zy-dowka, her swarthy face flushing deeply, and an expression of inquietude taking possession of her countenance.

"It is averred by Blazek the herdsman of the Wraniczko farm, that about midnight the

youth encountered with him at Ostronimptsch,—insisted on assuming the Chlopkian dress,—and —”

“Made towards Lubionki?” — exclaimed Salomea. — “The Lord of hosts in his mercy forbid!”—

“So earnest?” — interrupted the Grodski, “I espy more mischief in this woman!”

Again the Zydowka assumed an air of sullen obduracy.

“Were it not well to confront the wife of Szmuhl with this second witness?” interrupted the Predco who had entered the Justice Hall with the Hayduck, on their return from the Jewish suburb.—

“If his worship pleases,” cried the Hayduck, we might fetch hither the herdsman Blazek from Wraniczko, and be back again within the second hour?”—

“’Tis well!”—said the Grodski, who was growing weary of his unusual exertions and anxious to shake off the business. “Predco!—make out warrant of arrest for the fellow!—

Karolek, remove the woman to her dungeon; and you, friend Felinski, come home to my house and eat a mouthful while the train is laying."—

"Within *how* short a time undertake you to bring hither the body of Blazek?"—said the farmer to the constables.—

"With your excellent permission, in two hours."—

"Then shall I have time and to spare!" replied Felinski, as though thinking aloud.—

"Thanks, Grodski, thanks for your good will. I must profit by the interval to hasten home to my suffering son."—And as he quitted the chamber, the farmer was observed to utter a passing whisper to the Predco and his Hayducks.

"And such are the anxieties," mused the good farmer, as he pricked hurriedly homewards, "in the face of which weak sighted mortals covet the duties of paternity.—My sons!—my sons!—very heavily is my age disquieted for your safety. Ye go from me even as the vapours of the morning. My home is about to become desolate;—

for lo ! I have heaped up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them !"—

But as he approached the last enclosure leading to Lublowicz, his feelings of terror and affliction were converted into indignation by the sight of Nepomucen, trudging towards him with Traszlach bounding by his side ;—the face of the lubber distended into its squarest smiles, and the beast apparently animated to its wildest gambols by the satisfaction of its master. To Felinski the presence of Pulafski's son was at all times unwelcome. He hated him for his grossness,—his stupidity,—and for his engagement with Mineczka Michaëłowska. Though Juliusz had refrained from expressing in his father's presence aught that might lead to the detection of his attachment for the betrothed wife of Nepomucen, Felinski had not been slow to discern the bent of his inclinations ; and in the bitterness of his recent vexation, was often tempted to fancy that the pang of disappointed affections was the origin of that recklessness and desperation with which the young man had plunged

into a connexion with the Lubionkian Confederacy. Unable to conceive the possibility that the young lady of Wraniczko, or any other young lady, could remain insensible to the devotion of his noble Juliusz, he imagined that but for the claims of Nepomucen a happy union would have secured the prosperity and security of the son of his affections. On all accounts, therefore, the mirthful mood in which the lubber advanced to greet him was sovereignly displeasing.

“Good day, and a happy, happy greeting to you, Pan Felinski,” cried he, capering anticly forward, so as to impede the advance of the farmer’s horse.—

“Detain me not, young man,” replied Felinski, “I have no leisure for fooling.”—

“Never believe me if *I* have greater inclination for’t!” cried the lubber, tossing up his confederatka-cap in the air, and exhibiting his shaven crown.—“My heart is merry, and not my head giddy.”—

“Then art thou no mate for me,” replied the farmer, impatient of his gambols, “for lo! *my*

heart is heavy with many troubles.—Let go my rein, Nepomucen, and farewell.”—

“Poor thanks for my good news!” said the lubber, a cloud overcasting his broad, good-humoured face.

“What news—what?—Is Konstanty returned?—speak.”—

“Konstanty might come and go, or stay away fifty times in the twelvemonths,” quoth Nepomucen with his usual prolixity, “and his comings, goings, or tarryings would bring never so much as a ‘God save us,’ from me, or a wag of the tail from Traszlach. Konstanty is too high an upholder of himself above earth’s common creatures to possess much hold upon their love.”—

“Of whom then your news?”—

“Of my dear Juliusz!—my own Juliusz!—my friend Juliusz!” cried the lubber, tears of affection starting into his eyes. “Never believe me but all my way to Lublowicz this morning, I blubbered and blubbered like the nun that plays the *Mater Dolorosa* in our Easter pageant at the Jarmark. And when I reached

the farm in company with our good brother Joachim—”

“Ha! has the Priest been with him?”—

“Father Joachim is accounted of many a skilfuller leech than even Doctor Szemieth of Wodarodko; and though perhaps a trifle less experienced than he takes himself to be, still of very high account for pharmacy and 'stilling of simples.”—

“*What* said he of my son?” cried Felinski, uncertain whether he should not gain earlier intelligence by making all speed homewards, than by parleying with the blockhead.—

“Marry, he said,—(what with all respect to his reverence, I think was pretty well known before,) that Juliusz Felinski was very ill.”

“Is that thy cause of glee?”—said the father angrily.

“Upon which, the woman Katarzynka fell exclaiming that his aid and counsel were wanting, and not his homilies; and taking him aside, ere he was well inclined to relinquish his patient's

hand, demanded of him,—yes or no;—would the boy live—would the boy die?”—

“And he answered?” gasped Felinski.

“Not a word!”—

“My son — my son!” faltered the old man.

“Never believe me,” continued Nepomucen, “if instead of replying, the priest laughed not outright in her face. For, quoth he, the youth is but fevered in his veins by over excitement of heart or head,—thought or feeling; and it shall go hard but, with the aid of the lancet, we will set him on foot, ay! and on horseback too, in a day or so.”

Felinski's first movement was to uncover his head, and raise his eyes devoutly to the sky; his next, to lean from his horse and stretch forth his hand towards Nepomucen Pulafski, who was again making antic demonstrations of delight.

“I thank thee for my son!” said the farmer; and his heart was too full to utter more.

“Thank *me*?—thank God and the good brother!” cried Nepomucen; “though the first I

suspect thou hast already done, and the second art about to do. At the first tidings of Julius's sickness, I sorely lamented me that Szmuhl the Zyd, accounted the first healer in the country, was off to Lithuania,—never believe me but I did. But now that the priest promises so fairly all seems right again. So forward, farmer, forward home;—and may your cheer be as great as mine."

And with a long whistle to Traszlach (whose tendency to the study of natural history was just then detaining him in a deep furrow, to the infinite terror of two young leverets,) Nepomucen went his way; leaving Felinski's mind lightened by one half of his heavy load of affliction.

In the course of the proceedings at the Ratusz, however, a new source of uneasiness had suddenly burst upon him. His first impulse on hearing of Konstanty's disparition in the forest had naturally been to connect the fate of his son with the professed enmity of the ruffians of the Jama; and the involuntary horror expressed by Salomea on hearing

of his visit to the Puszcza, and her connection with the Węglarze as wife to Szmuhl the contractor and protectress of Doska, served to embarrass rather than to obliterate his suspicions. But it had suddenly occurred to him that, by some unlucky fatality, Konstanty had mastered the mystery of the Confederates of Lubionki; that he had rashly intruded into those councils, to the desperation of which he could himself bear witness;—and perhaps, fallen a victim to his pertinacity!—Even in his present softened mood towards his son, Felinski could not but call to mind the arrogance and dauntlessness of his character:—he had probably breathed defiance to Xawery's associates, and been laid low in requital of his aristocratic Quixotism.

The old man instantly determined to betake himself to Lubionki. Juliusz was already under good guidance and with fair prospects; and it was Konstanty who now possessed the most pressing claim on his paternal aid;—the handsome, brilliant, prosperous, successful, — but avenger-sought and guilty Konstanty!—

He dared no longer persevere in his application to the Grodski for means of searching and scouring the Puszcza; for the safety of Juliusz might be implicated in the detection of the offenders. But if the Zydowka's declaration concerning the renewal of his illicit connection with the daughter of the Weglarz were to be relied on, the young man might perhaps be concealed in some retreat known only to Doska, in the vicinity of the Jama. Felinski trusted to his own activity and patience to obtain a clue to the mystery.

CHAPTER XXII.

A grieving parent and a tender mind,
Timid and ardent,—tender and refin'd,—
These, all with mighty force, the youth assail'd
Till his soul fainted, and his reason failed.

CRABBE.

THE satisfaction arising to Felinski from the improvement wrought by the skill of the Jesuit in the condition of his younger son was not, however, followed up by success or prospect of success, in penetrating the mysterious cause of Konstanty's absence. It was in vain that the Zydowka and the herdsman were confronted in the hall of the Ratusz;—it was in vain that

the farmer obtained an interview with Xawery, —and even hazarded a second meeting with the Węglarz and his ferocious sons.—

“ Would we did indeed know,” said they, “ the lurking place of the Dworaczek !—not long should he cumber the earth, which for us and our household he hath planted with thorns for evermore.”

Even the counsels of Father Joachim were, for once, vacillating and inconsistent. The Jesuit's eagerness to conceal the captivity of Doroska, —his apprehension that the absence of Konstanty was, in some way or other, connected with the secrets of Lubionki, —all tended to perplex his view of the subject ; and, although, at his instigation, a letter was despatched to Captain Felinski at the head quarters of his regiment, days passed away, and no answer was returned !—Meanwhile one palliating circumstance afforded alleviation to the household sorrows of the farmer of Lublowicz. Michaël-owski, with whom, for many years past, his ancient friendship and neighbourship had been de-

clining, laying aside every paltry feeling of envy or jealousy, the source of their misunderstanding came nobly forward to his aid and solace. The master of Wraniczko seemed to lose sight of his own cares and concerns in compassion for the perplexities of the father of Konstanty and Juliusz.

If the truth must be owned, the eyes of Minieczka's father had been considerably enlightened to the state of his family affairs by the recent crisis. The confessions of Blazek and Szatzka,—the undisguised anguish of his daughter,—the remembrance of all that had passed between himself and Konstanty on occasion of the young man's last visit to Wraniczko, produced a suspicion in his mind that the young soldier had disguised himself for his visit to the forest, in the view of obtaining a secret interview with the object of his affections. It remained to decide by what enemy or opponent his course had been so unfortunately intercepted.

For a moment, Michaëlofski's misgivings glanced towards Nepomucen. But there was

something in the uncouth ingenuousness of the lad that seemed a sufficient security against any mal-practices on his part or instigation.

“*I* jealous of Mineczka?” — cried he, on Michaëłowski’s accusal. “*I* devise harm against the painted butterfly soldier? — Chrystus and St. Józef, forbid! — I have tilted at him, I own, ere now in the way of a jest; but never believe me if even Traszlach my dog would not scorn to take advantage of such a poor flimsy flutterling! — Moreover, and between our trusty selves, father-in-law mine that is to be, — never believe me but I am weary of being twitted at wake and fair, — church and market, — Ratusz and Karczma, — that I am fain to have a wife who makes open disparagement of my parts: — and father and I are of opinion that if it suit you or the young lady to break seal of covenant on the matter, the Panienska would be happier as the bride of my friend Juliusz Felinski; while I——”

“While *thou*,” exclaimed Michaëłowski contemptuously, but rejoicing at the unexpected offer; “*thou* wouldst as willingly place at the

head of thy household board, Agatka, the swineherdess of Ostronimptsch?"

"Not so, good neighbour of Wraniczko," cried Nepomuk, sticking his thumb self-importantly in the pas of his kontusz. "*My* karabella would make as ill a swine-goad as thine own; nor are either Traszlach or I so hard to seek for a mistress, but we may come yet to match with the Aristocracya. There is choice of brides by the hearth of the worshipful Grodski; and when I have fixed my fancy on one of his three daughters, the other two, Pan Szlachcic, may remain for thyself to chose from."

This sally, and the uncouth wilfulness of old Pulafski and his son, were not without effect in inspiring the farmer with a more earnest desire for tidings of the gallant captain; and in softening his heart towards the distress of Mineczka.

"There is but one measure to take," said he, on his next visit to Lublowicz; (where the pale cheeks of the enfeebled Juliusz grew to a still more ashen paleness while Michaëlofski described to the father the wretchedness of his girl.)

“ Visit the Czartoryskian camp ; and if Konstanty still remains absent from head-quarters, obtain a warrant of imprisonment against the Weglarze,— Szmuhl and his family,— and any other person implicated in the affair. But my good neighbour is too much troubled in mind to act with forecast and discretion. Juliusz is hourly recovering ; you are well able to leave home : and I, with your good pleasure, will bear you company.”

Father Joachim, who was cunningly watching the proceedings of all parties, warmly seconded the plan. He was eager to get the two parents out of the way ; in hopes that their absence might advance his favourite design of uniting Juliusz with Mineczka, — enable him to recover his influence over the mind of his former pupil,— attach him anew to the Confederation,—and by rendering him acquainted with Konstanty’s discovery of the secret vaults and Doska’s captivity, (which, during the critical illness of Juliusz he had been careful to conceal,) afford a certain clue to his brother’s place of refuge.

“ Let us go then, my kind and considerate

friend!" cried old Felinski, laying his cold and trembling hand on that of his neighbour. "These things are too much for my courage. The world goes hard with my grey hairs:—but I will seek my son, or means of vengeance upon those by whom his young blood hath been spilled."

On the following morning accordingly they set forth upon their journey. The Ekonomo of the estates of Lublowicz and Wraniczko, undertook the diligent performance of their duties during their absence; and the two Mazurkan farmers quitted their several homes to meet at Lubloyst on their way to Warsaw, intent only upon the interests to be pursued on the spot to which they were hastening; and totally unsuspecting of the mighty chain of events, by which their properties, their homes—their households,—were trebly environed.

"If my brother yet live, he must soon be heard of;—if he be no more, trust to your son to revenge him," said Juliusz, as his father fell in a parting embrace upon his neck.—And Felinski, whose heart was too full for words, had

quitted the house and was about to mount his horse, when a sudden presentiment overcame his fortitude;—and retracing his steps, he returned to the hall—and again,—tenderly,—clingly, —claspingly,—folded his favourite child to his bosom!—

“My father!” sobbed Juliusz, overcome by the old man’s emotion; “I am well;—my strength strengthens daily, —hourly. Nay, so well and so strong am I, that if thou tarriest long in thine errand, I shall take courage and go forth to meet thee by the way.”

“Not so, stripling!” muttered Father Joachim between his teeth, who was present at this touching adieu, “*I have work for thee here.*”—And while Juliusz stood watching the last glimpse of that revered parent whom alas he was to behold no more, the Jesuit was already projecting by what means and method he could most readily bring about a meeting between his pupil and Mineczka Michałowska.—

But another individual had already pledged himself to secure the interview. Nepomucen

who, from the luckless night of his explanation with the Jesuit, had devoted himself to serve the interests of her supposed attachment to Juliusz, was the first to visit Wraniczko with tidings of his amended health; and she had already claimed his aid to further her earnest desire of visiting Lublowicz.

“Never believe me if I hold it altogether a decorous and maidenly thing,” thought Nep—as he betook himself homeward, in order to cajole his old mother out of the use of a vehicle to drive Mineczka through the forest, “for the Panienska during her father’s absence to be so set on a meeting with her sweetheart as to invade, uninvited, his very dwelling; and I begin to rejoice having escaped wedlock with so skittish a commodity. But who *could* help loving Juliusz? — (even Traszlach scarce makes difference of favour ’twixt me and him!) — and who, (loving him), could refrain from visiting and comforting him now that he is feeble with sickness, and crossed with care? — The girl *shall* to Lublowicz: — that, marry, shall she; if

Niemczyk himself should arise and cross our path."

Juliusz Felinski was indeed an object deserving compassion. Two divinities had he served with all that fervour of youth's idolatry which rendered up the twin impulses of his soul to love of the father-land and her whom he esteemed its fairest maiden. But Poland was already Styx-bound, like the bride of Orpheus, in the fetters of her powerful aristocracy;—and the daughter of Michałowski avowedly devoted to another:—and who but Juliusz—the child of enthusiasm,—would have persisted in his hope and love?—Instigated by the representations of the Jesuit, his preceptor, he had turned to the Confederation of the Holy Cross as to the morning-star of a new day;—and instigated by a still more potent monitor,—(even the touch of nature in his heart) clung to his affection for Mineczka as though so pure, so fond, so undeviating a love could not fail, by the mere reflection of its fervour, to beget love in return.

He was now undeceived. The promptitude

and firmness exercised by his father in dissolving his confederacy with the Lubionkians, had withdrawn him from the bright path of Honour to which he would have devoted himself; and Konstanty's recent declaration of an intention to reward with his dainty hand the fond devotion of Mineczka, had withered up the feeble flowers of hope springing in the sunless obscurity of his heart. He had been derided for lack of energy by the *węglarze*,—he had been driven like an alien from the door of Michaëłowski; and the fire of indignation burning in his breast, and the icy chill of despair benumbing his soul, instead of stimulating him to some desperate action, had overcome, in their fearful contest, the energies of his physical strength. The enthusiastic and excited spirit of the young scholar had o'er-informed its tenement of clay; and at the moment of Konstanty's departure,—at the moment when Father Dionysius was bearing the oriflamme of redemption from hamlet to hamlet, from town to town,—at the moment the Confederates, armed for the day of strife,—the day of

retribution, — were waiting only the signal of the beacon-fires to take the field,—unite with the fraternities of the north and the south, and, having possessed themselves of the strong posts of the two neighbouring forests, to despatch a deputation of remonstrance to the Senate, — Juliusz—Juliusz was lying senseless on a bed of sickness.—

But although even Katarzynka, a doctress of some account among the *Kmieć* of the estate, was obliged to confess that the medicaments of Father Joachim acted like a charm upon the sufferer, they had not yet restored elasticity to his steps, or peace to his bosom. At all times pale and taciturn, Juliusz Felinski was now wan and silent as a spectre. Above the middle height, and shaped with a perfection of symmetry improved by the athletic exercises to which he had been habituated from his childhood, the large languid hazel eyes and auburn hair of the youthful conspirator derived no enhancement from the vivid hues of health, unless, when in some crisis of excitement, a dark crimson spot of

fever-flush burned on his cheek, imparting wild and terrific beauty to his finely-chiselled features. —The idol of Felinski's age,—the promising scholar of the Jesuits,—the darling of the peasantry of Lublowicz,—the youngest, yet most prized, of the Confederates of Lubionki,—although wholly deficient in the brilliancy and shewy accomplishments of the Pulawyan page,—was richly endowed with those glorious characteristics of intellectual superiority which denote the predominance of the spiritual over the mortal particles of human nature. No person but would have singled him forth from the crowd as one born to distinction,—as one destined to strive or perhaps *suffer* mightily in behalf of his fellow creatures.—The stamp of Almighty favour was upon him!—

And never had this impress been stronger than now;—now, that he had risen from a bed of death to a life of despair;—the hopes of his affection blighted,—the ardour of his patriotism paralysed!—

“This cannot last,” faltered he to himself,

on the evening of the day the two fathers quitted Lublowicz, and he was left alone in his desolate home.—“So soon as Heaven puts strength into my arm I will go forth,—labour in the vineyard,—and perish at my post. My pledge of renunciation reaches only to the Confederates of Lubionki; and when my father’s misgivings are assuaged by finding as he surely will, my brother executing his wretched duties in the camp of the enemies of the people,—I will away to Grodno.—Father Joachim’s avouchment will procure me sanction from the Captain-General in Lithuania :—I will gird on my sword in right earnest;—and follow, or, it may be, lead, the Heaven-hallowed phalanxes of the Brethren of the Holy Cross where the hardest struggle of their destinies demands the widest outpouring of blood.—And should my dying eyes close on the regenerated fortunes of Poland,—should I at least survive to see the glorious company of her equalized children unite to rear anew the banner of the White Eagle, and form a rampart of defence against the incursions of

Pruss or Muscovite,—Tâtar or Suabian,—then, oh! then, would a happier destiny await my dying hour than years of lingering life could realize!—So let me die, O! God,—so let me die; and my fond father in the redemption of his native land would find atonement for the loss of Juliusz. Yes!—even my brother's bride might wear the tokens of sorrow for my memory, and say, 'Although I loved him not,—he died for his country!'

Even while he breathed this silent aspiration its unconscious object stood beside him. Profiting by Nepomucen's kindly aid to escape from Wraniczko, (careless of the interpretation such a measure might receive from the malice of the Grodski's maiden-daughters or old Pulafski,) Mineczka was come to seek communion with the only living being from whom she could derive comfort in her afflictions!—

CHAPTER XXIII.

I saw the descending beauty whom I loved
Honouring my threshold with her step, and deigning
To smile on one whom all the world abandoned.
Once I had been her lover ! How sincere
It fits me not to say.

The Falcon. BARRY CORNWALL.

“ JULIUSZ, — dear Juliusz ! — my friend, — *my brother !* ” — faltered Mineczka : and Juliusz turned shudderingly from the casement through which he was gazing on the evening sky, as that last epithet greeted his ear. But when he looked upon the face of Michaëłowski’s daughter, every resentful passion was calmed in a moment. — Her features were tinctured with deathly white-

ness, save where the swollen lids assumed a leaden hue; her lips were parched and blackened by fever;—her beauty gone,—her spirit darkened to a shadow.

“And hast thou, indeed, suffered thus?” cried the horror-struck Juliusz. “I thought my own afflictions heavy;—*but thou!*”—

“Can’st thou wonder?” she replied, “when there is cause to fear that, in his wilfulness to visit Wraniczko,—to visit *me*,—he fell into the hands of violent men?”—

“Believe it not, Mineczka,” replied young Felinski; “fear not, for any threatened evil, that Konstanty has come to wrong. I know him, —I know his recklessness, and the wildness of his courses, and not a tear have I shed for my brother; for assured am I, even as I now stand beside thee, that he is safe,—well;—that his adventure hath been one of sportfulness—that, that even now, he sits laughing among his gay comrades at the anxiety he has occasioned.”

“Unjust,—ungenerous,—envious!” cried Mi-

neczka, drawing away from him. "Didst thou not surely know Konstanty in his grave, thou wouldst not dare malign him thus!"—

Juliusz started; and, for a moment, a hectic spot burned fiercely on his cheek.

"When I shall be in mine, Mineczka," he replied, "thou wilt repent these aspersions. I have not long to tax thy forbearance. Thou, dearest, and he thou lovest, wilt dwell within these walls with children and children's children climbing your knees, when the worm has gnawn its way to this heart, where anguish worketh now a work as deadly. Mineczka! I say unto thee again,—I have not long to bide with thee. I have borne patiently with thine alienation,—do not,—do not further tax my fortitude with thy disdain."—

Her heart, which had been swelling within her, first with the consciousness of her own petulance and lastly with the pain of his reproof, now overflowed; and with a burst of tears, she flung herself upon the bosom of her early play-mate and sobbed aloud.—

“Forgive me, — forgive me!” — faltered Juliusz, not trusting himself to enfold her in his embrace. “Selfish in my sorrow, I forget that thou too art a sufferer. — But what hast *thou* to fear or to bewail? — Thou lovest, art beloved! — Unperplexed by knowledge of the evil fortunes of thy country, — young, — fair, — healthful, — prosperous, — canst thou suppose the destinies so ruthless as to snap the thread of *thy* bright existence or of his who is so dear to thee, while the broken-hearted and despairing sue in vain for death?” —

“Juliusz,” said Michaëlofski’s daughter, extricating herself from his arms, and throwing herself on a chair. “I came hither for comfort. — It is no comfort to me, Juliusz, my brother, to hear thee make light of my apprehensions; — still less, that, thou shouldst raise in my heart, on thy own behalf, the terrors thou wouldst extinguish on Konstanty’s. — Thou hast been ill: — thy face is pale, — thy looks are haggard, — thy hands icy cold, — thy step tremulous. — But these are tokens of despondency rather than mortal sickness. Fa-

ther Joachim promises that the free air of the fields and quietude of mind will quickly restore thee. Wherefore then affect such gloomy presentiments?"—

"I feel them no longer, *now* that thou art here, and speaking gently, and looking kindly upon me," said Juliusz, gazing rapturously upon the beloved face which, now that the riding hood had fallen back on her shoulders, was fully displayed. "But when absent from thee, Minieczka, I begin to know how dark will be my fortune, how desolate my heart—soon—soon—when the vows of the altar shall be between us, and I must think of thee no more!—For years past thine image has been to my mind like an emanation of divine hope;—*that* lost,—why should I live,—why struggle with the waves and the darkness, which no day-spring can ever illuminate?"

"Alas! how can I answer this?" cried Minieczka, wringing her hands. "I know that I should say 'Cheer thee, Juliusz—Juliusz be happy!'—But I cannot.—The words cleave to my

lips. It is not for *me* to doubt or disparage the influence of withered affections. There is a tone of hopelessness in thy voice which has also been in mine;—there is a ghastly hue upon thy face which I have long beheld upon my own.—Juliusz!—why is all this?—we are young and innocent,—why are we thus hardly visited?—It is the appointed destiny of man to suffer;—but few suffer as *we* are suffering!—Pray with me that there may be an end to it;—for alas! I have ceased to look for other solace.”—

“But should our fathers bring back good tidings to thee—should Konstanty return, (as he surely will) what wilt thou say, Mineczka, when I remind thee of thy needless despair?—Wilt thou not smile, then, dearest, when my brother’s lips are on thy cheek, and his plighted hand in thine own?”—

“I shall *not*!”—replied Mineczka, firmly; “for I shall know that Juliusz is still unhappy.”—

“Could I believe that word!” said Juliusz, slowly approaching her, and taking both her hands in *his* hands, as he stood mournfully

contemplating her beauty :—" Could I, dare I, believe that, in thy day of happiness, Juliusz the lover would be forgotten, and Juliusz the friend freshly remembered,—then indeed were I well content to die."—

" Cold-hearted vain and selfish are those who resign themselves to *such* contentment!" cried Mineczka; and the energy of her words and voice contrasted strangely with the inexpressive dimness of her eyes,—the immobility of her features :—nay, even the raven braids of her hair seemed hanging deathlike on either side her pale face. " The boor, as he expires upon his straw-pallet, stretches out his hand caressingly to the dog who has been the companion of his weary life, and yearns to tarry with the beast that loves him. The old man,—whose step is feeble,—whose sight dim,—whose hearing deadened,—even *he* shrinks from the darkness of the grave, while he can catch at intervals the sound and the shadow of his grandchildren at play in the sunshine. But that thou, Juliusz !—thou, whose sight is as the eagle to look upon the faces of those who love

thee ; — thou, whose ears from thy youth upward have been greeted only by accents of tenderness, the fond.—fond tenderness of thy father, the faithful service of thy people ;—that *thou*, in the selfishness of thy sorrow, should'st desire to go down to the grave, —is as the feebleness of the egotist and the worldling."

"Speak on—" murmured Juliusz in a low whisper of intense passion, fixing his eyes upon her, as though to impress more forcibly on his soul every look, every gesture, every lineament of her beauty,—“for thy voice has a spell for my trouble!”—

"I say again," replied Michałowski's daughter, raising her eyes reproachfully to his, "thou courttest death only to escape those transient sufferings which manly courage should surmount."—

Juliusz waved his head—

"What else then?" cried Mineczka.—

"All else!" said the young man, still detaining her hands, and gazing stedfastly upon her.—

"Rememberest thou not, dearest, the death-plaint

of Thekla, as I have interpreted to thee that mournful German verse!—

‘Du Heilige!—Rufe dein Kind zurück!—
Ich habe genossen das irdische Glück,—
Ich habe gelebt und geliebet!’ ”

“Nay, but thou hast *not* loved!” she replied, speaking low and looking from him, as fearful to trace resentment in his countenance. “Love is not love, unless sigh be rendered back for sigh.”

“Thou saidst not always so!” faltered Juliusz, reverting to the period when, still doubtful of Konstanty’s affection, he had been on terms of happier confidence with Mineczka.

“I would say that”—

“Say nothing which breeds contention between us!” cried Juliusz. “*I* know,—for despair has a wisdom of its own,—that nought is left for me on earth. My country is about to become the prey of barbarians,—my chosen wife, the wife of another.—Why should I live on, to behold the foot of the Kalmuck upon the fair fields of Mazowsze!—I go hence with the image of thy brightness glowing in my mind. Why linger on to see the cares of life plant silver amid those

raven tresses,—hollows in those rounded cheeks, — embittering the sweetness of thy voice, and rendering thy buoyant footsteps heavy and hopeless?”—

Mineczka strove to extricate her hands from his. She felt that she was not a guest under the roof of Konstanty to hear praises of her beauty from his brother.

“Grudge me not this short—this last interval of happiness!” cried Juliusz: “it may be that we shall meet no more on earth—and surely—surely, *never* free and unwatched as now.”

“Juliusz—Juliusz!—Panna Mineczka!” cried Nepomucen, thrusting in his uncouth visage through the open casement. “Never believe me but here is the Priest Joachim alighting from his mule in the stables. I am a lost man,—and *you* are lost men; for he will away and let my mother know to what end I made free with—”

“Peace, peace, Pulafski!” replied Juliusz, leading his trembling companion to a seat. “Father Joachim is our friend. We have nothing to fear.”—

And as he spoke, the door was flung open, and the Jesuit appeared;—but not as he had ever before appeared in the eyes of his young disciples. His demeanour, usually governed with the severest discretion, was impetuous, restless, hurried;—the spirit of excited energy burnt in his eyes;—and determination and desperation compressed his lips.—Instead of expressing, as Minieczka had anticipated, surprise and approval on finding her the companion of one whom he had so often and warmly commended to her favour, Father Joachim advanced hastily towards her, and vouchsafing only a fervent, but hurried, benediction, entreated she would betake herself to the care of the good Katarzynka, while he communed apart with his neophyte.—

“No!” replied Michaëlofski’s daughter, re-seating herself and crossing her hands upon her knee.—“I will *not* go.—Ye have news of Konstanty:—I will not quit the chamber.”—

“Maiden!” said the priest assuming a look of severity,—“this obstinacy and its origin are alike unbecoming. But since thou wilt it so,—

remain! — That which I have now to speak, though long guarded from all eyes save those of the Almighty and his chosen ones,—(lest peradventure a bird of the air should convey the secret into the chamber of the king), — will soon roll as a thunder-cloud over the land. No more secrecy,—no further caution!—It shall be shouted in the hearing of the Senate—in the councils of the Republic—that the fiat of the Holy Catholic Church is paramount in Poland;—that the land shall be henceforth governed by one sole human law,—one only creed divine;—that the Almighty commits its destinies to the hands of his Vicar the Pope and that Vicar's chosen servant, the king;—beneath whose delegated sceptre, the PEOPLE,—without distinction of rank,—shall enjoy even justice,—equal Freedom!”—

“Has aught occurred”— exclaimed Juliusz, warming, though startled at the Jesuit's almost frantic fervour,—“to change or enlarge the prospects of the Confederation?”

“Only that the appointed hour is come!” replied the Jesuit. “The mission of the good

Brother Dionysius is fully accomplished. The people congregate by thousands and tens of thousands. The Lubionkians (roused by tidings that the hand of justice is upon the dwelling of Szmuhl the Jew,) have hastened to appropriate the arms therein deposited :—and happily,—for Keyserling has obtained promise of immediate succours from the Czarina. The blow must be struck immediately, or it will be struck too late.”—

“What means all this!” cried Mineczka trembling,—though scarcely aware against whom or what, the stern denunciations of the Jesuit were directed.

“Hush, hush, Panna Michaëłowska!” mumbled Nepomuk; who, having followed Father Joachim into the room, was now crouched down beside her in an attitude of docility, borrowed probably from his favourite Traszlach.—“Never believe me if ’tis a becoming thing for damsels to meddle in matters of church or state government!”—

“Juliusz, my son—my favoured one,—my

promising!"—cried the Jesuit, observing with concern the languor still visible in the face and figure of young Felinski—"Behold the hour of triumph is at hand, and thy sabre is rusting in the sheath,—thy arm feeble with sickness,—thy step faltering with debility!"

"Not so, father!" replied the young disciple, his cheeks flushing with new emotion. "When Poland has a task for her children, their strength strengthens to the proof.—But, alas!—an oath is on my soul!—My father has exacted a sacred promise that I consort not again with the synod of Lubionki—"

"And thou hast *given* such a pledge?" said the Jesuit sternly.

"Else had he denounced the Confederation to the tribunal of Czerczk!"—

"And shall a vow extorted by intimidation prevail over thy better judgment?" cried the priest.

"Is it not written, 'If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word;

he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth?" said Juliusz in a low voice.

"The laws of the Hebrew Lawgiver address themselves to Szmuhl the Zyd!" cried Joachim contemptuously. "The Son of man who had power on earth to forgive sins, had also power to bestow on the anointed priests, his servants, a right whereby they loose the chain of the captive and free the soul of man from an unholy oath. Therefore Juliusz!—I, even I—thy spiritual pastor, absolve thee from thy vow."

The young man unwillingly but involuntarily hesitated. The sabre of his father hung upon the wall before him; and the authority of his father was still paramount in his mind.

"But since thou art so peevish a stickler for terms," persisted the Jesuit, — noticing his hesitation, "henceforward be thy mind at ease. It is *not* the 'Confederates of Lubionki' who meet to-morrow night in the clearing of the Puszcza. — The associated Brethren of the Cross have named that spot as their ren-

devious; and in the name of thy country, Juliusz Felinski, I call upon thee to come forth and join the ranks of her true sons;—in the name of the Holy Mother Church, to protect her against the machinations of Dissidents and heretics.”

And, having taken from his bosom a crucifix of ebony and silver,—adopted as a symbol by the League of Grodno, and accepted throughout its various confraternities, — he stretched it forth and smote upon the breast of Juliusz, as though in enforcement of his adjuration.

Instantly submitting to the appeal, the young hero kneeled before him and humbly kissed the extended pledge. “I accept the call!” said he, earnestly; — “may the Almighty grant strength of mind and body to render my service effectual!”

“Juliusz!” cried Mineczka, starting from her seat, and bending over him ere he could arise from his knee. “Is this thing lawful?—Speak, Juliusz! — art thou not pledging thyself to some blood-seeking and fatal cause?—Speak, Juliusz! —Is there not violence projected?”—

"Panna Michaëlokska!" exclaimed Nepomucen, striving to draw her away by the skirt of her tunic, "did I not forewarn thee that plots and conspiracies were no matter for a maiden's meddling? — Better lend thy aid to Katarzynka, yonder, to knead her bapkas of Mariemontish flour; for never believe me but the times——"

"Juliusz!" continued Mineczka, heedless of his loudish interruption, "in the book of divine law it is written, 'Burning for burning—wound for wound—stripe for stripe!'—Provoke not, oh! my brother, the judgments of thy God!"—

"Out of thy own mouth, maiden, do I condemn thee!" cried Father Joachim,—amazed at her opposition, as a shepherd, were a lamb of his flock to turn upon him in ferocity. "It is written, 'Burning for burning — wound for wound—stripe for stripe!'—and thereby are *we*, the servants of an avenging God, deputed as ministers of his wrath to visit upon the oppressors of the people the oppressions they have practised."

"Are we not," cried Nepomuk Pulafski, un-

sheathing his sword, and brandishing it round his head, "are we not the retributors of iniquity?"

"Peace, fool!" cried the Jesuit, aware of the injury his own arguments might sustain if uttered by such indiscriminating lips. "Let none interpose betwixt me and my disciple."

"Fear not, oh! father!" said Juliusz, having gently displaced the arm of Mineczka from his shoulder, and risen from his knee. "Henceforward I have no guide but thou."

"And my father and *his* are away!" ejaculated Mineczka, despairingly, "and there is none to counsel or prevent him in this desperate strait!"

But Juliusz, at a signal from the Jesuit, had already followed him out of the chamber, lest the further discussion of their plans in Mineczka's presence should lead to some evil result; leaving Nepomucen with his betrothed but contumacious lady.

"Pulafski!"—she cried, approaching him with so much vehemence that he started back as if apprehending mischief. "You love Juliusz?"—

"Heartily!—sweet Panienska!" he replied—looking forth from the window, either to ascertain whether Traszlach still kept watch for him, or perhaps meditating a precipitate retreat.

"Tell me then truly,—*what* perils is he about to encounter?—and do the plots they speak of extend beyond controlment of the Grodski and his people?"—

"The Grodski is an ass!" quoth Nepomucen, drawing himself up self-importantly; nor could Mineczka venture to oppose the verdict, which had been repeated in her ears by Konstanty so long as she could remember.

"Aided by our people then?" she resumed.
"The peasants of Wraniczko would——"

"Boh!" exclaimed the lubber. "Talk no longer of what *peasants* will perform!—There is no further insight into the measure of their obedience, Never believe me but half thy father's boors, and a third part of Felinski's, and the whole four quarters of mine, are recruited into this self-said association. Nay, I much doubt me, Panienska, whether there be a man worth

calling a man in the district, saving always Michałowski,—Felinski,—Pulafski the ancient,—the Grodski and thy fair self,—who are not sworn of the Confederation. The Magnat Czelenski himself might as well write himself down in the muster roll :—for whether he hold a buckler of security over the brethren by his political vagaries, or join them at once for good or evil,—what difference?”—

“That Konstanty were but here !” ejaculated Mineczka, who, in his brother’s assurances, had recovered her hopes of her lover’s safety.

“That he *were* !” exclaimed Nep, twisting the pendent tips of his flax-like mustachios. “That I or some other of the Brethren might set the gallant Uhlan a galloping with a pellet and pop-gun !—Never believe me if I would not extinguish the red-hot valour of the puppy of Pulawy, by plunging him hissing into Katarzynka’s bucket of barm !”

“Idiot !”—exclaimed Mineczka, stopping her ears with her hands, that she might recal her

scattered senses for her own guidance and government.

“Miserable that I am!” she cried, as with an air of offended majesty the lubber stalked out of the room. “Even this shrieveless thing deserts me!—A storm, a fatal storm overhangs my father’s house; and the least wagging of my finger may be a signal to draw down its bolts.—Aid my ignorance, oh! God, with thy wisdom; for the wisdom of man is unavailing. Why—why must my youth be tempted thus,—thus tried—thus grievously tormented!”

CHAPTER XXIV.

A thing of robes and trinkets, dizen'd out
To sit in state as for a Sovereign's picture,
A popular scourge—a ready sentence-signer ;
A sceptic of all measures which had not
The sanction of the Ten.—

MARINO FALIERO.

MEANWHILE Konstanty, reckless of the difficulties and dangers to which his mysterious disappearance might give rise at Lubloyst, pursued his way towards Warsaw, with much fatigue, but little molestation. His leave of absence was expired ; but it was needless to lose time at such a crisis by making his way to head quarters, when he knew that the importance of his mission would effect-

ually exonerate him in the eyes of his illustrious patron.

Having resolved to proceed in search of Prince Czartoryski, wherever he might be,—to acquaint *him* in the first instance with the important secret of which accident had rendered him master, and seek instructions concerning the further measures to be taken,—it was his fortune to reach the palace of his highness in the suburbs of Warsaw, and intercept the departure of the Prince for the town of Petrikow, — where the grand tribunal of Poland was now on the point of assembling.

The moment was, in every point of view, critical to the destinies of the Republic. Krim Gueray, regarding with jealousy the advance of the Russian forces, had despatched a message to General Soltikoff threatening, should so much as a single Polish cabin be invaded, to march into Russia at the head of a hundred thousand Tatars; while Keyserling, to whom was intrusted at Warsaw the arduous task of moderator,—(and who was fond of comparing himself with Flami-

nus, by whose artful negotiations with the Greeks, city after city was, under a pretence of succour and alliance, submitted to the Roman power)—unwilling to embroil the Empire solely to forward the interests of the Czartoryski faction, had already suggested the evacuation of Lithuania. The Czartoryskians deeply mortified by this apparent abandonment of their interests on the part of the Tzarina, remonstrated in vain; nor could the indignation of their nephew, the young Count Poniatofski, be pacified by the wise and generous exhortations of his relative, the venerable patriot Branicki,—who represented in noble and touching terms the wickedness of exposing, in furtherance of his ambitious prospects, the suffering and enfeebled Republic to the fatal grasp of Russian protection.

But although the minister Count Brühl had succeeded in his object of securing the withdrawal of the army of intimidation, he was fully aware that his own influence with the imperial government had no share in the negotiation; and that the remonstrances of her Prussian and Tâtar allies,

had alone instigated the decision of Catherine. Yet so irritating to the Czartoryski party was his success in this important piece of diplomacy, that they had already resolved to impugn the title of his family to their Polish genealogy, with a view of excluding them from the Senate:—even as the pretensions of the King of Prussia to hereditary nuntioship had been formerly set aside.—The younger Count Brühl, supported by the interest of the Potocki family to which he was allied by marriage, was equally resolute in the support of his claim; and an order having been issued by government that no military should be present at the Tribunal of Petrikow, the Magnats had assembled trains of the small gentry connected with their several houses, to the number of some thousands each; fifteen thousand nuntios being already gathered together in the little town about to be made the scene of political and personal contentions.

Meanwhile, the king, for some months past in a lethargic state, was verging towards

his last hour; and while the ambitious Poniatofski and his party,—too eager for the attainment of the supreme power to submit to the still delaying decree of nature,—would willingly have accelerated the crisis by a revolutionary movement, Keyserling, old and wary, insisted on waiting the event.

The restlessness of the young count and the bitterness of soul with which he resented the apparent desertion of the Russian minister, did not, meanwhile, escape the notice of the Prince his uncle; who, having hitherto regarded the accomplished Stanislas as his own stepping-stone to the throne, now discovered that it was on his own account Poniatofski had ingratiated himself into the favour of the Tzarina and the confidence of her ministers.—Recognizing at once the whole extent of his error in having selected so astucious a delegate to the Court of Petersburg, and perceiving that Stanislas, whose mischief-stirring quotations from the Mahomet of Voltaire he had often derided as romantic, had formed in the destinies of that usurper the manual

of his political life, — saw the urgent necessity of strengthening his own cause against the machinations of an enemy whom he was still compelled to treat as a kinsman and friend. — The danger was imminent. Augustus might at any moment breathe his last; and Czartoryski perceived that, unless he could secure some notable ally, all hopes of his long coveted elevation to the throne of the Jagellons was at an end. — A stroke of infinite audacity, or an intrigue of consummate art, could alone redeem his cause. —

Such was the state of affairs on the evening when young Felinski, alighting at the Czartoryskian palace, demanded an interview with his highness for the disclosure of the important intelligence of which he was at present sole depository; and great indeed was the amazement of Konstanty when the Prince, — from whom, although reared in his household, he had hitherto received only the haughty notice likely to be bestowed by one of the first magnats in the kingdom on the son of a Mazurkan farmer,

—suddenly threw his arms around his neck, and placed upon his finger as a pledge of immediate promotion a diamond doubling the value of that which had so marvellously excited the raptures of the Zyd and Zydowka of Lubloyst. Even while the young Uhlan, confounded by his patron's liberality and almost repenting that he had advanced so far in his negotiations for a plebeian dowry of forty thousand ducats, was kissing the hand of the Prince in acknowledgment of his munificence, the plan of Czartoryski was already digested. Yes!—There was no alternative; a coup d'état was his only resource. His purpose must be effected by the union of the Arctic and Antartic,—the East and the West,—the volcano and the glacier. He would make an advance towards alliance with Brühl!—(his mortal enemy through thirty years of crafty statesmanship!)—and the vital secret of the confederations of Lithuania and Mazowsze should become the seal of the compact!

“Follow me,”—said he, addressing himself to the young Uhlan and leading the way to his

travelling carriage, which already stood waiting in the court yard to convey him on his road to Petrikow.

“To Petrikow, my gracious lord?” inquired the Podstarości of the household; amazed to observe young Felinski promoted to such sudden favour with his Highness, as to accompany him side by side.

“No!—to the Brühl palace!” replied Prince Czartoryski;—and had he directed his domestics to convey him to the gates of Erebus, the amazement of the group of menials in waiting under the Palace portico could not have been exceeded.—The BRÜHL palace!”—The spot which, day after day, was in their flowing cups freshly remembered as a den of Haydumacka, —a nest of treachery, —a vast Pandora’s box, overflowing with mischiefs for Poland!—Was it to be believed?—Yes!—the equipage of the Prince was already rumbling off in the direction of the Plac Saschi!—Could he be gone to provoke his ancient adversary to single combat; and was the young Captain to be witness to the affray?—

Impossible!—the protracted illness of the Saxon minister was known to every individual in Warsaw; and it would have been as easy to rouse the lethargic sovereign himself into an heroic vein, as to animate the martial ardour of the weak and vacillating minister of his weak and vacillating reign!—

“Has your Highness any hope of finding his Excellency disposed for business at this late hour?”—inquired Konstanty, anxious to change his travel-soiled dress, and the tawdry pelisse borrowed of Rozetzka’s father, ere he made his appearance in the gorgeous saloon of the Prime Minister. “We shall assuredly find that the Count has adjourned to Princess Lubomirska’s Macao table.”—

“His Excellency has closed his account with cards and princesses,” said the Prince, “unless when he holds it desirable to conceal the precarious state of his health in furtherance of the interests of his family. Brühl has one foot and half the other in the grave!—That last visit of the Court to his palace sealed his fate; and there has been

more skill of drugs and doctors to keep him alive for the last six months than it has taken to depose the last four sovereigns of Imperial Muscovy.”—

“Did your Highness hear the tale,” said Konstanty, respectfully, “that Count Potocki, (having penetrated unannounced into his private apartment,) found his Saxon Excellency prostrate on the floor, in abject devotion before a species of *Chapelle Ardente*?”—

“I heard also his apology!” replied Czartoryski, with a degree of gravity calculated to silence the flippancy of his companion; “an apology respectable even in the mouth of a Brühl. ‘I have laboured till the eleventh hour,’ said he, ‘in the service of my temporal master;—do not grudge me the few minutes I would devote to propitiate my eternal Judge.’—May we find him to-night in a mood equally edifying!”—

But to infer from the sample of one day the humour of the unstable Brühl on the day succeeding, was to calculate on the mutability of the winds.—Although the minister of Augustus had in some degree renounced those habits of

more than imperial sumptuousness which have rendered his name proverbial among the by-words of foppery; although he no longer varied his suits of embroidery and trinkets of estate till they afforded a complete change for every day in the year, or affected to make his court to a dying king by the majestic splendours of an establishment that afforded higher relief to the studied simplicity of his Royal master;—the Brühl palace still presented a monument of his former lavish magnificence. Not Mazarin, in the wantonness of his tasteful profusion, had ever so gloried in adorning the temple of which he was the idol;—not Mazarin, in the peevish decay of his latter days, exhibited a greater reluctance to quit the ‘pleasing anxious being,’ which fortune had embellished so far beyond the dreaming of his early ambition.—

Yet had it not been for the storm impending over the destinies of his house, so deeply involved in those of the House of Saxony, the soul-sick minister would willingly have laid aside his glittering orders, and retired from the now

importunate brilliancies of a ministerial career.— The grave was open before him ;—and the gloom investing that pit profound is necessarily proportionate to the previous elevation of its destined occupant. The step from a palace to the dust is not more responsible than from a hovel,—but who shall deny that it is more startling?—Like our own “haught Cardinal,” the Count was already beginning to recognize that he had wasted on a king the zeal and homage due to his Creator ;—like him exclaiming in self-conviction—

“Vain pomp and glory of the world !—I hate ye !”—

And he had a right to hate them,—for they had blinded his eyes to the still higher glories of Eternity !—

It was not however to Czartoryski, his rival and enemy, that Count Brühl was likely to betray either the weakness of his condition or the repining of his spirit ; and in preparing for the interview as his equipage rolled under the magnificent portico of the palace, Prince

Czartoryski anticipated astonishment, — resentment, — mistrust, — machination ; — but no admission of infirmity, either physical or moral. —

If the amazement of the valetaille of the Czartoryskian palace had been great on learning the destination of his Highness, that of the porter and guards at the Brühl palace, on recognizing the liveries of their visitor, was still more remarkable. Startled out of all presence of mind, they admitted him without hesitation ; and the Prince and his young companion were ushered by the lacqueys to the chamberlains, and by the chamberlains into a suite of state apartments — unoccupied, — yet as a matter of etiquette, nightly illuminated, — at that epoch equalled in splendour by few royal palaces in Europe. — Count Brühl, who in the prime minister never sunk the courtier, had in fact made his own love of luxury a means of adulation to his sovereign. — “I am *obliged* to play the prodigal,” was his boast in earlier life, “or His Majesty would forget to provide me with the necessaries of life ;” — and Augustus himself, too indolent for a due

observance of the pomps and forms of royalty, (having passed his youth in the hunting field, followed to the chace in all seasons and all weathers by the ugliest queen in Europe, in her sedan chair,)—was well satisfied that the magnificence of the courts of Dresden and Warsaw should be borne on the shoulders of his minister.—

To gratify the tastes of the king,—the chief feature of whose disastrous reign was the collection of the Dresden gallery, and the improvement of the Meissen manufactory of porcelain,—pictures and vases of the most exquisite kind accordingly adorned the apartments so frequently honoured with the royal presence : and even Czartoryski, although regarding with a jealous eye the possessions of his rival, could not but cast a glance of admiration on the unrivalled productions of genius gracing his palace.—On Konstanty, the effect of the brilliant scene was overpowering. Such was the atmosphere which, to the giddy fop, presented the ideal of paradise ! He could conceive no beatitude more celestial than to be a

dweller in those lofty chambers vaulted with golden fretwork, hung with the rich and glowing tapestry of Gobelin;—resplendent with gilding, crystal, lapis-lazula, marble,—with pearl-embroidered divans, and sofas of Turkish brocade.

“Happy Brühl!” thought he, as he tripped along the Persian carpet.—“Talk of heroism,—philosophy,—the laurel!—Make me minister to a lazy king, and give me this palace for my Serail!”

Such were the ideas passing in the mind of the courtierling at the moment he was on the point of surrendering the lives of some sixteen thousand individuals to the edge of the sword!—such his ungodly coveting, when the chamberlain, throwing open the polished doors of an apartment, at the very end of the suite, announced “His Highness Prince Czartoryski,” to the satrap of the resplendent scene. But could it indeed be *he*,—the Sybarite—the Sardanapalus,—the Alcibiades,—on whom the eyes of Felinski fell on entering? Was such his voluptuous retreat?—Such the luxury of his retirement?—

Habited in a suit of the simplest kind,—his gray hair combed out,—his person devoid of a single ornament,—his pallid and attenuated face worn by care,—his countenance sharpened by a restless and anxious expression,—a peevish looking old man rose from a table on which burned two solitary tapers, beside a small book, evidently of a devotional kind. A cup of medicated drink stood beside it;—and the Count, startled beyond all self-control, had scarcely time to lay aside his spectacles, ere he rose to welcome with cold but most ceremonious politeness his inexplicable guest.

“Suffer me to conduct your highness into another apartment,” said he. “This valetudinarian’s chamber is fit only for a sick old man; who, when thus undeservedly honoured, is willing for a time to forget his infirmities.”

“With your excellency’s pardon,” replied the Prince, (fixing on the tremulous and shrunken hand of his rival a scrutinizing eye, which when Brühl jealous of his inquisition hastily concealed, Czartoryski directed his glances on-

ward to the door, to imply an especial desire for privacy,) — “If we are here secure from interruption, it is unnecessary to disturb you further. The important business which compels me to trespass on your Excellency’s attention, is of a highly confidential nature.”

The Count turned his emaciated countenance towards Konstanty, as if in demand for further explanation.

“Suffer me to present to the notice of your Excellency, a deserving young officer of my household, — Captain Felinski,” — said the Prince; “who is desirous of an occasion to make proof of his devotion to the interests of the state.”

Konstanty’s obeisance to the gray-headed minister who for the last five years had been the object of his caustic mockeries, was respectful, even to servility. Already he fancied he could feel a string of orders hanging to his own button-hole; — already he imagined himself invested for life with a *Starostwo* and its dignities. —

“Since you deny me the satisfaction of re-

ceiving you more worthily," said the Count, having formally acknowledged the salutation of the young stranger; "deign at least to be seated here in my lazaret." And touching on the table before him a spring connected with the bell of the anti-chamber, his confidential valet-de-chambre appeared.

"Hermann!" said he, "recollect that while his Highness honours me with his company, *I am alone.*" A phrase conveying to the establishment his Excellency's will not to be interrupted by the entrance of the maitre d'hotel, with announcements or refreshments.

On the disappearance of the attendant, a deliberate look of inquiry on the part of the feeble but still dignified old man, seemed to demand an explanation of the peremptory visit of the Prince.

CHAPTER XXV.

Waste, rapine, spoil, without, th' assault begin,
And our mad tribes supplant the fence within,
Since then their good they will not understand,
'Tis time to take the monarch's power in hand ;
Authority and force to joia with skill,
And save the lunatics against their will.
The same rough means that 'suage the crowd appease
Our senates raging with the crowd's disease.

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL.

“MAY I presume to inquire, in the first instance,” said the Prince (careful not to hazard the premature disclosure of intelligence of which the astute statesman might afterwards pretend previous cognizance), — “whether your Excellency has any especial advertisement of troubles in the provinces of Mazowsze and Lithuania?”—

The desire of harassing his guest by a bitter

retort, blinded the eyes of Count Brühl to the object of the interrogation.

“None!” replied he,—“unless such as must necessarily be more extensively known to the House of Czartoryski than to His Majesty’s minister;—and which, thanks to the law-defying and God-defying recklessness of our Russian allies, are sufficiently bruited throughout the courts and countries of Europe.”—

“I am to infer then, that no tidings have reached the High-Chancery of a political Union, —purporting to repress, by yet ruder uproar, the disturbances of the Radzivillians and their party?”

“Such rumours may have reached the bureau of the Chancellor of the Interior,—I am not aware that he has considered them worthy of reference to the Rada, or to myself.”

“Pardon me, my lord!—Your Excellency would have cause to resent that the information to which *I* am alluding, had been with-held by one poor quarter of an hour from your private ear.”—

“With your Highness’s permission,” said Brühl, again laying his hand on the table

spring, "I will summon my confidential secretary: by whose assistance I shall be better enabled to confer with you."—

"No!" said Czartoryski firmly. "Our conference is not of a nature to admit such interposition.—I must commune with your Excellency face to face, mind to mind; or retain my intelligence for the Rada Nienstajaca,—or the opening of the dietine at Petrikow."—

"Speak, Prince!"—said Count Brühl, startled and impressed by the decision of his tone.—"I conclude I have to thank your courtesy for having selected *me* as the first referendary of an affair which, by your inferences, I understand to be of grave import?"—

"Most serious,—most urgent,—most fatal," replied Czartoryski,—"and which, but for a fortunate discovery on the part of my friend here, Captain Felinski, and his promptitude in affording me the means of exposure to your Excellency, would probably have been heard of within a week's time at Warsaw, by the conquering march of an insurgent army."—

A nod from the Prince and the earnest inquiries of the minister, now gave the signal for Konstanty's circumstantial narrative; which was imparted with more succinctness and energy than might have been anticipated from the ordinary jargon of the coxcomb.—During the explanation, Czartoryski fixed the scrutiny of his keen eyes upon the countenance of the Prime Minister. But statesmanship of forty years' duration had hardened it against all such examinations; and the Prince might as easily have decyphered the characters of human passion on the surface of a parchment diploma.

“Most singular—most strange!” was all his comment at the termination of Felinski's romantic tale. “And the disclosures by which your attention was directed to this synod of the Puszcza of Lubionki, took place, sir, if I rightly understand, in the stall or shop of some brokering Jew in the hamlet,—village,—town (how shall we name it?) of Lubloyst?”—

“We will name it, if your Excellency pleases” said Czartoryski contemptuously, “a town,—con-

taining three thousand and some hundreds of inhabitants;—swayed by a chief magistrate of Your Excellency's especial appointment; and boasting among its burghers many—perhaps *too* many individuals professing unlimited devotion to the house and succession of Saxony.”

“I humbly thank you, Prince, for a reply to one portion of my interrogation,” said Count Brühl, a slight tinge of red overspreading his withered cheeks. “It is, I conclude, to Captain Felinski I must look for an answer to the more important part of my question?”—

“His Excellency wishes to learn, my dear Felinski, the *cause* of your visit to this Zydwokan den of treason,” said Czartoryski with an ironical smile. “He will not allow me to economise your blushes by attributing the fact of your keeping ill-company to the follies which occasionally lead your superiors to traffic with usurers and bond scriveners.”

This sally, intending to satirize the well-known propensities of the prodigal Saxon noble, failed in its effect. Brühl was too busily en-

gaged in examining the countenance of the witness to have an ear for the sarcasms of his enemy.

“ You were tempted then into this suspicious habitation, by your *necessities* ? ” inquired the statesman ; — desirous of piquing Felinski into further revelations.

“ If your excellency pleases — No ! ” — replied the young Pole, with the morgue of an Ottoman. “ I went thither, on the contrary, with a heavy purse of ducats in my hand. ” —

“ To put forth on usurious interest ? ” —

“ No, my lord ! — With your pardon, I am compelled to admit, that the origin of my well-starred visit, was an adventure of gallantry. ”

“ How, Sir ! ” exclaimed Brühl. “ Was the wretched habitation you denounce of still deeper infamy than an usurer’s stall ? ” —

“ A young person in whom I was interested was accidentally its inmate. ” —

“ I scarcely see my way through these mysteries, ” observed Brühl, bending his eyes steadfastly on the Prince ; “ yet I cannot for a moment imagine your Highness would draw the

attention of government to any but authentic sources of information.—It is impossible, however, to proceed without some insight into the localities and particularities of the disturbed district.—No time is to be lost. I must request Prince Czartoryski's patience and the attendance of his protégé, while I summon the attendance of Count Czelenszki (on whose estate, recently enfranchised, these discontents appear to be in active progress); and the presence of His Grace the Primate, as President of the Rada, without whose counsel and sanction I cannot presume to lay the details before His Majesty or the Senate."—

The secretary was accordingly summoned, and despatched with a signet ring and invitations of pressing urgency to the two Magnats. "There is a ball at Countess Potocka's," said the minister to his official delegate. "You will find Czelenszki among the dancers;—but hasten first to the Archbishop of Gnesna; or His Grace will have betaken himself to rest.—Go, Sir—the mission is of life and death."—

"In consideration of the propensities of the parties," cried the Prince, as the secretary respectfully hastened to obey, "your Excellency would surely have done better to despatch the gentleman at once to——"

"Pardon me!" interrupted Count Brühl, eager to prevent a retort on the part of the caustic Czartoryski so bitter as to interrupt the harmony of their negotiations. "It is *because* the haunts of my friends are known to me that I thus issue my instructions."—He was fully aware of the contempt entertained, by the Prince for the feeble, but well intentioned Primate; and that Czelenszki, although connected with the Czartoryski family and on terms of friendship with the noble ladies of Pulawy, was personally unacceptable to the Prince. But the necessity for witnesses both to and of the conference between the prime minister of Augustus and the factious partizan of the Republic, suggested their presence as a mutual check and mutual evidence.—

It would have amused a disinterested person,

or rather a person *interested* in detecting the weaknesses of these guardians of the welfare of a great, but decaying, nation,—to observe the two individuals high in station as human dignity could make them,—loathing each other with an intensity of abhorrence great in proportion to the mighty interests out of which the sentiment arose,—sitting together in the stillness of night, in a chamber dimly lighted, smiling with factitious smiles, discoursing in artificial discourse of objects foreign to the excitement of the hour; and each solely and strongly bent on turning the other to account, and rendering him subservient to his personal interests and selfish projects.

To Konstanty, however, who had not sufficient philosophy to enjoy the lesson, and no interest in either the Prince or the Minister excepting so far as they could be rendered administrative to his own vanity, the minutes passed with a leaden pace.—His two lordly companions uttered sententious phrases touching the Fine arts—the progress of literature, of luxury, which

he thought singularly tedious; wanting wit to detect and admire the hollowness of purpose and vagueness of tone which proved that the minds of both were wandering; and that while they prated of the Laocoon or the Whetter, their souls were with the machinations of the Russian cabinet, the deliberations of the Diet, and the Confederation of Lubionki.—

At length, and to the great relief of all parties, the equipage dispatched for the Primate rolled into the court-yard; and almost at the same time Czelenszki made his appearance.—A few minutes sufficed to elicit from the lips of the Minister (practised in the act of diplomatic exposition) an outline of the momentous affair requiring their councils.

“From you, my lord Archbishop,” said Count Brühl, addressing Lubienski, in conclusion, “I have to implore advice respecting the eligibility of laying a matter so critical before his Majesty, in his present most precarious condition:—from *you*, Count, to solicit such information in attestation of the circumstances narrated by Captain

Felinski, as may throw further light upon the mystery!"

"I am compelled to admit with regret," replied Czelenski, deeply moved by the intelligence he had just received, "that I am very insufficiently acquainted with the condition of my property in Mazowsze. My ancestors have rarely inhabited Wodarodko; and since my return from my travels, I have visited it only for a fortnight."

"And yet," said the Primate sternly, "you presumed to require of the state, for a race whose habits and dispositions were unknown to you, a sanction for their insubordination,—a license for their treasons!—My lord —my lord!—you have much to answer for in this matter."—

"I myself represented to Count Czelenszki," said Brühl, "in conceding the point to which he attached so much importance, that he was bestowing means of mischief on a community who would probably turn against themselves, and certainly against *him*, the weapons placed in their impractised and misjudging hands; that he was depriving them of the protection of his seignory, without

according either a compensation or a substitution of authority."

"Let me intreat your Excellency to remember," said Czelenszki, with dignity, yet flushed by anxiety lest indeed the evil should prove in any way connected with his rash but generously motivated measures,—“that according to the accounts at present before us, this union, this Confederation, this *conspiracy*, must have been months, perhaps years, in process of formation. *My* interference in behalf of the peasants of the Wodarodko estates dates but from a month; and it is my most conscientious belief that had it earlier afforded to these misguided but miserable men, beacon-light of hope to cheer the darkness of their condition, they had not enkindled watch-fires of treason among the forests of Mazowsze."

"We are not apt to commend the husbandry of those who scatter their good seed on a waste unprepared by tillage to aid its germination," observed Czartoryski. "Count Czelenszki seems to have anticipated a prosperous harvest on easy terms."

“Count Czelenszki anticipated, — hoped, — *trusted*—that by the aid of Providence he might become an instrument of good to his fellow-creatures,” said the young man loftily. “If he looked with an eye somewhat too sanguine upon the means at his command, blame his youth, my lord; and his firm and honest confidence that his people,—his fellow countrymen,—his fellow-Polanders,—those who have followed his forefathers to victory over the hordes of Muscovy and Tâtary,—would follow *him* in support of the institutions of their country, and the rejection of foreign usurpation.”

“My young friend,” interposed the Archbishop, personally as well as professionally a man of peace, and now eager to prevent the outburst of irritation hovering on the lips of Czartoryski; “would have done well to remember that a tottering wall is not to be re-endowed with stability by the interpolation of here and there a brick or granite block of sounder quality. The foundations themselves must be renovated; or a partial reparation tends but to accelerate the ruin of the structure. Count Czelenszki would have better admi-

nistered to the interests of the cause he advocates so warmly, by renouncing those habits of absenteeism he has pleaded in extenuation of his ignorance of the unquiet spirit existing among his Wodarodkers;—by settling on his estates, redressing the grievances of his people, and subduing murmurs which had clearly their origin in the profligacy and insubordination of the people of Lubloyst.”

“Under your Grace’s gracious pardon,” said Konstanty, (eager to win favour with his noble neighbour of Wodarodko) “the people of Lubloyst,—properly the people of Lubloyst,—are a race of submissive and subservient wretches as you would wish to see.”

“As I would *not* wish to see!” sternly responded the Primate.

“Nor was it till companies of filthy Jews and cunning Jesuits were quartered among them that”—

“Whoever you may be, young Sir,” interrupted the Archbishop, bending a brow not often knit in sternness, “respect this presence more than to unite by an unseemly figure of speech, the misbe-

living Jews of Lubloyst with sons of the true church, under whatever specification included."

"Therein, at least," said Czelenszki, with honourable candour, "have I indeed an error to avow. The Jesuit chiefly implicated in this fearful discovery, is my Almoner:—and the Jews who"——

"No *Jews*, Count; I denounced but a single Jew;—a certain Israelitish broker and contractor of the town of Lubloyst," said the flippant Felinski.

"The Jews,—you were about to say?" said Brühl, turning to Czelenszki; and for his own share, eager only to obtain the best information on the subject under discussion.

"The Jews, my lord, have I fear been over-much encouraged and protected on my estates of Lubloyst: which, having been consigned to the legislation of my agents and Ekonomes,—by *their* advice, and in some measure for want of competition, the distilleries, charcoal-pits, saltpetre works, and other undertakings, have been leased to Jews; men of credit hitherto unblemished, but it appears extensively implicated in"——

“ Pardon me !—not *extensively*,” again interrupted Konstanty. “ I must once more entreat your lordship to remember that I have included in my denunciation only one Szmuhl, of the Jewish suburb of Lubloyst ; whose den of thievery has proved a hatching-hole of treason.”

“ My chief tenant !” ejaculated Czelenszki ; “ and part holder of the most considerable distillery in the district.”

“ Had your lordship deigned to dry up *that* abundant source of wretchedness and brutalization,” said the Primate, gravely, “ it had been an act of greater mercy towards the serfs of Wodarpd-ko, than to find themselves deprived of your protection under a pretence of enfranchisal.”

“ We waste time !” cried Czartoryski, impatient of unavailing discussions, when so short a period remained for action. “ The effect, and not the cause, now imports us. What is to be done ?—A few hours’ delay, and it will be indispensable that the affair should be laid before the tribunal of Petrikow : while by prompt measures this Confederation, (chiefly important as a nucleus of future mischiefs) might be put down, without

rendering the act a watchword for the gathering together of the malcontents of the kingdom."

"At the present moment," replied the Archbishop of Gnesna, calmly, "all overt demonstrations should be as far as possible avoided. The infirm and inefficient condition of his Majesty would leave the responsibility of the act on my own shoulders, should it please Providence, by a sudden acceleration of his fatal maladies, to remove our gracious king."

"And what responsibility will it leave," cried Czartoryski, impatiently, "should a general union of the Confederations actually take place; to join forces with the rebel Radzivil, and bring their complaints and intimidations to the very plain of the Vola?—My lords,—while we trifle thus, the Republic is in danger!"—

"I humbly trust not," replied Brühl, cheered by the presence of Lubieski,—a man indebted for his elevation to the house of Saxony and its delegates. "Nay, at present, we have but the testimony of a single witness to the very existence of the evil."

"I am inclined to instigate," said the Primate, "that my young friend, Count Czelenszki (avowedly the author of some portion of the evil), do instantly set off for the disturbed districts:—take accurate note of the state of public feeling,—and acquaint us by express of the urgencies of the case."—

"Madness!"—cried Czartoryski, chafing beyond his own control at the supineness of the valetudinarian minister and sober churchman.—"The train is on the eve of explosion;—a few hours only remain to us for a countermine!"—

"The night after to-morrow, my noble lord," said Konstanty Felinski, "was expressly designated by these two dogs of—the—the—two Jesuits,—I would say,—for the assembling of the Confederation;—armed, and in order of resistance. Let the insurgents once march forward in array from the recesses of the Puszcza, bearing defiance to all constituted authorities and promise of redemption to the peasantry, and ten thousand men will flock to the standard of the Holy Cross

within twice ten hours of the sounding of their war-cry!"—

"Invoked in the name of their country and their creed," cried Czelenszki, "(for whatever nefarious purpose those sacred words be profaned,) not a son of the soil but will quickly join their array."—

"You apprehend, then, in right earnest," said Brühl, inclining to reliance on Czelenszki's view of a case where his conclusions could not but be lenient, "that the Confederation of Lubionki presents an aspect of grave import to the Republic?"—

"Many trifling circumstances within my own knowledge are, I must admit, concurrent with the declarations of Captain Felinski," replied the Count, gravely.

"Then, indeed, is the peril imminent!" cried Brühl,—starting from his seat. "We must not even pause till morning to lay the affair before those great officers of the Rada who have not yet set off for Petrikow."—

"Preventative measures, if speedily and de-

cidedly taken," said the Archbishop, in his usual mild, drawling, tone (so much at variance with the promptitude he advocated), "might still forestal demonstrations alike alarming to the Republic, and injurious to the people."

"The two cavalry regiments in quarters at Lazienka, under the command of the gallant Colonel Salkanski, shall have order of march within half an hour," continued Count Brühl, taking his tablets from his pocket. "Were it not hazarding the excitement of public curiosity and surmise, I would venture a request to Prince Czartoryski that the brigade of Uhlans in which this gentleman is serving should proceed with them on their route. As it is, I must rely upon his friendly aid to sanction Captain Felinski's service with the troops of the Republic, to whom his guidance and instructions appear indispensable."

Czartoryski, detecting in the project of Brühl an intention to exonerate himself towards Keyserling and the Czartoryskian party by premising the coalition of its princely leader, readily acqui-

esced in the proposal. Already he noticed in the countenance of the minister (although troubled by new and unexpected anxieties) an expression of exultation arising from his own advances. Beset by the contentions of rival factions, each saw in the other the sole ally by whose support he might be enabled to make head against the majority.—

“My young friend,” said the Prince, glancing kindly at Felinski, has past three nights without rest, and two days on horseback. I therefore solicit of your Excellency, in his name, a rendezvous with the troops at Wielicz, a station within four leagues of Lubloyst. *I* will take care that he is at his post.”

“It is my intention instantly to visit Wodarodko,” said Czelenszki, perplexed by the courtesies thus singularly passing between two men whose reciprocal antipathy had filled the kingdom with foreign troops. “If Captain Felinski, —whom I recognize with pleasure as the son of a neighbour highly respected in the district of Lubloyst,—will accept a seat in my travelling

carriage, we shall reach Wielicz some time previous to the arrival of the detachment!"—

"Be it so!"—said the Prince; while Konstanty bowed his acknowledgements:—and, after a short conference, employed by Count Brühl and his secretary in taking notes of names, distances, and numbers,—Czelenszki and the young soldier departed together: while the primate, perceiving on the part of Prince Czartoryski an inclination to prolong his interview with the prime-minister, and eager in his soul to promote union between those whose good understanding so deeply imported the interests of the Republic, hastened his adieus to both.

"I shall repose on the hope," said he, as he quitted the chamber, "that your Excellency's instructions to Colonel Salkanaki will be to spare the waste of human life, and reduce these madmen to submission by demonstration of the fruitlessness of resistance."—

"To hear these heroes of the Crosier maunder of temporal government," ejaculated Brühl,—as the pages in waiting closed the door on the

exit of the Primate, whom Czartoryski, and himself had conducted as far as the anti-chamber, — “one would imagine them ignorant that human compacts have never yet united jarring factions, unless by the cement of human blood; — an effusion indispensable in libation to the Até of earthly discord.”

“And yet 'tis hard,” said Czartoryski, sneeringly, “that, having deprived these men of arts, commerce, and motives of honourable industry, we should affect to reprove them with the roaring voice of a cannonade, only because Beelzebub, finding them idle, affords employment to their leisure!—This grant of Czelenszki's will prove a mighty source of evil!”—

“Adverse circumstances have rendered it so,” replied the Count. “But 'tis not too late;—and since in spite of the Primate's churchmanly remonstrance,—in spite of your lordship's inferences,—blood *must* flow to calm the fever of the Confederation, be it my task to turn it into a channel that may efface the sign-manual on the fatal contract of Wodarodko. But that I espy the shadows of

Radzivil and his Reverence of Krakow wandering behind the scenes of this rural drama, my first task should be to cut through the coil of ropes twisted by the boyish folly of Czelenszki."

"One word more, my lord, ere I leave your Excellency to the digestion of the difficulty," said Czartoryski,—as they again reached the threshold of the minister's cabinet or oratory. "On the eve of my departure for Petrikow, I crave the favour of a few minutes' private audience."

And once more the astonished secretary of Count Brühl saw the door of the little chamber close mysteriously upon the conference of his master and his master's enemy!—

CHAPTER XXVI.

And *man*,—whose Heav'n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,—
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn.

BURNS.

AND now, the storm which for so many months had been gathering over the fair fields of Mazowsze, was on the eve of bursting forth!—Although the incarceration of Zydowka and the official seal still affixed upon her dwelling, prevented access to the stores of Szmuhl, the vigilant Jesuit took care that a sufficient provision of the arms and ammunition which for a year past had been by slow degrees, deposited in the vaults,

should be removed to the cloister. There was no longer time for caution. Let the attention of the Grodski of Lubloyst be attracted or not by the number of peasants daily visiting the Jesuitry, it was indispensable that the confederation should be placed in order of action, without the delay of a day, an hour, a minute.

Accustomed to the utmost exercise of his faculties,—to examine, combine, direct, and look widely into the future without losing sight of the pressing interests of the passing hour,—Father Joachim appeared to gather strength and energy from the approaching crisis.

“At the head of a body of ten thousand armed and able men,” mused he, (at the close of a night passed in distributing arms to hundreds of applicants within those consecrated gates, heretofore sought for doles of charity or remission of the stain of mortal sin,) “I shall dictate such terms to the senate as will leave the richest mitre of the Republic at my disposal; or, if it please Heaven to remove the sickly dotard who now weighs down the throne with his leaden insignifi-

cance, let the day of election come, and the plain of the Vola shall find that other feet than have been accustomed to trample the surface, can plant themselves on its aristocratic earth!—Wearily have I dug, and sowed, and planted;—but easy and welcome will be the labours of the harvest!’—

But there was one portion of his task which neither skill nor patience could facilitate. Father Joachim, who had found it no difficult matter to produce a strong impression on the young and ardent mind of Juliusz and Mineczka,—to impose on the simplicity of their fathers,—subjugate the illiterate boor Nepomucen,—purchase the allegiance of this Jewish adherent,—or delude and misguide by the meteoric fire of his eloquence the ignorant Chlopstwo of the Puszcza,—had never yet found his genius put to the test by so unruly or so dauntless an opponent as the damsel of the Jama. Doroska, by nature shrewd, wilful, vain, and petulant, was indebted to the wandering tribes with which for three years past she had been incorporated, for a thousand wiles of cunning and agility. Her brilliant fancy and ready wit were

sharpened by hard encounter with the perils and perplexities of an itinerant life :—by turns a banterer and wrangler with the populace of cities, and a haunter of the wildest recesses of savage nature, her mind was alternately debased and purified,—blinded by the vanity of the hour to the reprobacy of her pursuits, or restored by the necessities of her condition to the wholesome bitterness of repentance!—Unlettered, untaught, uncared for, but eminently superior in faculties and dexterity, the cunning neophyte of the Bohemians sometimes bestowed upon herself, and sometimes upon others, the venom engendered in her bosom by the consciousness of degradation.

One only person was undeservedly exempted from the contempt and loathing with which the outcast regarded the race by whom she was caressed and reviled, — flattered and insulted. Her passion for Konstanty Felinski, for the brave and beautiful who had stooped to notice her in her obscurity, and bestow his affections (*his* affections!) on the charcoal-wench of Lubionki, was still unextinguished and inextinguishable.

Like many a gaudy plant whose fruits are bitter and poisonous, the flower of that first affection had been lovely in her eyes,—and the remembrance would not pass away.—She cursed the forms and institutions that kept them asunder,—the prejudices of birth which seemed to interdict him from raising her to his bosom and making her his wife: but she cursed not—(how could she,—so loving and so trusting him?) the betrayer,—the cruel,—the falsehearted,—who had first beguiled her from the humble home of her innocent youth; and then persuaded her to take refuge in a vile and baneful calling, only to remove her from a neighbourhood where the publicity of her shame might be productive of evil to himself. Not that the dishonour of a miserable Chlopka of the Jama by one of gentle birth would have been accounted a crime, or even a fault, among those of his degree: but Konstanty, in the course of his suit, had found ample occasion to recognize the unusual sternness of the Węglarz and the ferocity of his sons.—

The humiliations and degradations by which in the vicissitudes of her vocation Doroska had been beset, were however trivial in comparison with the vexation of finding herself the prisoner of Father Joachim, at a moment when the destinies of Konstanty seemed dependent on her freedom of action. During the summer weeks she had passed concealed in the cabin of an obscure straznik among the recesses of the Forest, the mysteries of the Confederation had been fully disclosed to her; and but for her knowledge that all her nearest connexions were involved in the Union, it is probable she would have attempted to convert the discovery into a source of fortune for herself or for Konstanty. But Doska, the wanderer of other provinces, nay, even of other countries,—a haunter of fairs, wakes, market-places,—the karczma, and szynk,—was fully alive to the importance of the question; and apprehending that a disclosure might be the means of condemning those angry brothers to an ignominious death whose animosity she had wilfully provoked, nothing but the discovery ac-

cidentally effected on occasion of the Zydowka's arrest, would have induced her to place the important secret at the disposal of the young soldier. And now,—now that she was a prisoner,—in spite of her sickness and feebleness a bound captive in a cell of the Zakon Jésuitów of Lubloyst,—she had the misery of knowing that Konstanty had gone forth with the express intention of seeking out the Forest meeting:—that *his* life was in the power of her enraged kindred; or theirs—(fatal alternative)—in his!

And *there* she lay,—hampered in the toils of the enemy;—neglected, forgotten; or remembered only that a pittance of bread and water might keep life fluttering in her repining heart!—*She*, the lithe of limb,—the tree-climber,—the posture mistress,—to whose elastic muscles movement was life,—lay bound on the hard pallet of a monastic cell,—measuring with her bloodshot eyes the height of the closely barred window; and vainly trying to fret away the hempen cords cutting into her delicate flesh!—Twice had Father Joachim visited her in her prison, in the

hope of obtaining some insight into Konstanty's objects and intentions: and twice when (foiled in his purpose by the courageous but audacious firmness of the captive) he addressed her in the terms of spiritual reprobation her abject calling seemed to justify, Doska's indignation burst forth into a torrent of invective, justifying further severity.—

“Lie there, blasphemer!” cried he at last, stung home by her biting sarcasms, “lie there, choking with the venom of thy bitter nature; while the limbs of thy dainty paramour feed the prey-birds of Lubionki. I ask thee of thy lover but to probe thy own designs; for soon shall the mangled body of Konstanty Felinski hang to the highest tree of the Puszcza,—a mark of scorn for the Confederates of the Holy Cross,—a mark of congregation for the vultures of Mazowsze!”—

This stroke of vengeance was as ill-judged as it was cruel. The mind of Doska, at all times a chaos of ungovernable passions, and recently excited by her perilous adventures in the forest, her wound, her momentary reunion with

the idol of her infatuated heart, — was easily inflamed to madness; and had not the Jesuit quitted the cell ere she recovered power of utterance, it is probable that not even the indurated bosom of a son of Loyola, had been proof against her anguish, her adjurations, her wild but tender lamentations.

And such was her condition, when Nepomucen Pulafski (on whose susceptible heart the airy elegance of Doska's figure in her fanciful vest of green and gold, as she was borne from the Zydowka's dwelling, had made a powerful impression) having left Father Joachim safe at Lublowicz with Juliusz and his fair guest, made all speed for the Friary, in hopes of obtaining a second glance of the prisoner.

“Twere a shame that the poor girl suffered any injury at the hands of those old hooded crows, the knavish Jesuits,” thought he, as he approached the portal. “For though not altogether of spotless life, and as I have heard, a mere rope-dancer and tumbler at the Dantzic fair, the damsel is of rare grace and fascination.

Never believe me if the braided locks of Mi-nieczka Michałowska are longer or brighter;—or the black eyes of the swine-herdess of Ostro-nimpszch half so sparkling!”—

During the absence of the superior, Nepomucen, as a sworn Confederate, commanded free access to the friary: nor had he wandered long among the cloisters, before the moans of the wretched prisoner sufficiently indicated the place of her confinement. But the cell was barred and locked; and the utmost the lubber could effect in gratification of his curiosity, was to climb up to the grated window for a remote survey of its inmate. All, however, that had captivated him in the picturesque figure of the young Bohemian had disappeared. Hand-bound, and foot-bound,—her countenance distorted—her teeth gnashing—her lips livid,—Doroska lay calling upon death to terminate her sufferings.

“The poor wench is frightened out of her reasonable self!” muttered Nepomucen, aghast at the grievous spectacle. “Never believe me but

'tis a scandal to a Christian country that a hard-souled, sedition-sowing, flinty-faced priest, should lay violent hands upon a creature as fragile and graceful as a roe of the Puszcza. For all her clipsome waist and arch looks, the poor Bohemian is no longer fit for aught but a lazaret for lunatics."

Attracted by the sudden darkening of the narrow window, the miserable girl turned her looks upon the intruder.

"Fiend!" cried she—and Pulafski's heart thrilled at the intensity of her shrill accents. "Art thou come to take me hence?—Welcome, dark one, welcome!—although the change lead to more fearful durance."—

"Patience, patience, Panna Doroska," cried Nepomucen, hoping to pacify her by excess of courtesy. "Never mistake me for Niemczyk or fiend!—look again, sweet,—and thou wilt see only an honest Mazur,—a much admirer of thy trimly waist and green cassokin."

"I know that voice!" faltered the sufferer, a glimpse of reason revisiting her distempered

brain. "Art thou not the lubber son of the rich farmer Pulafski?"

"What thou wilt,"—cried he, clinging to the window bars; and again in the honesty of his heart cursing the cruelty of her jailors.

"Tell me," she cried—a ray of hope imparting a momentary charm to her countenance; "tell me (if thou art, as thou boastest thyself, a man and an honest Mazur,)—have they—*have* they murdered my Konstanty?"

"Not that Hayduck or Grodski, or all the szlachta of the district in council at the Ratusz, have at present made out," replied the kind-hearted oaf;—and "old Felinski and my father-in-law of Wraniczko that is to be or was to be, are off to the camp to seek after him.—Blockheads! Never believe me but they might as well take flight after last summer's swallows, or last winter's fieldfares, as pace their way after so wild a truant as the mad Captain!"

"He is *not* dead,—he is *not* hanged on high to a tree of the Puszcza!" shrieked Doska, in a frenzy of joy. "Mighty God! whom have I blas-

phemed pardon, oh ! pardon me :—and thou, —man—friend,—comforter,—receive my thanks.”

“Thou art thankful for small kindness ; and no wonder,” rejoined Nep, “seeing that thy treatment is none of the mildest. Be of better cheer, damsel ! When I come again, it shall be with file and crow-bar to open thy prison door, and a stout knife to cut asunder those biting cords ; and should I gain promise of a smile and a kiss by way of recompense (and ’tis more than ever yet earned my kindness of the proud Panienska of Wraniczko,) never believe me if I do not set thee at liberty !”—

“Do it !” cried the captive, her eyes sparkling with hope, “and see with what tender gratitude Doroska shall reward thee. Go,—fly ;—save me, good Pulafski, —every added minute here is death.”

At this moment Nepomucen’s descent from his giddy elevation was somewhat accelerated by the sound of the great portal bell, giving notice of the arrival of the superior ; for though far differently impressed towards Father Joachim.

from his friend Juliusz, he regarded him with considerable awe. Nepomucen knew that it was a matter of decorum and respectability to show deference to the ministers of his faith; and with a shrewd suspicion — (a suspicion as shrewd as many that dart through the dense understandings of dolt-heads,) that Father Joachim was a knave and a traitor, — continued to fear him as a man, and revere him as a priest. Incoherent, therefore, and inconsistent were the excuses with which he greeted the inquiries of the superior touching the motive of his visit; and the Jesuit, who had already noticed the impression made upon the oaf by the graceful guest of the Zydowka, had little difficulty in tracing it to its true origin. Lending an impatient ear to Nepomucen's pretence of watching over the interests of the Confederation, he bad him hasten to Lublowicz, and release Panna Michaëlokska from her unpleasant situation.

Father Joachim had already satisfied the misgivings of his favourite disciple that, feeble and promise-shackled as he was, it was his duty to

mount and take the field rather than sit mourning in chimney nooks while Poland was appealing trumpet-tongued to the valour of her children,—and determined that should his morrow's intelligence from Warsaw bring tidings of the approaching dissolution of the king, the Confederation should towards evening muster openly on the plain of Ostronimptsch, march upon Lubloyst, make prisoners the official authorities of the town, and raise the beacon fires of the Holy Cross on the high lands adjoining the Vistula. The nearest garrison was situated at such a distance that two days must elapse ere any defensive measures could be efficiently taken against their movements;—previous to the expiration of which, the troops mustered by Father Dionysius would be in the field.—

“I tell ye,” cried Joachim, in addressing that night a select congregation of the Puszeza company, whom the tidings of Felinski's departure from the country again enabled to assemble at Xawery's cottage, “that mighty as is the host which God hath gathered together among his

children of Sarmatia to guard the sanctity of his ark from the touch of Dissidents, and heathens, no sooner shall the tocsin sound in the ears of those who slumber by the way side or dream away their souls in the sloth of luxury than thousands will arise,—yea! thousands—to elevate the banners of the Holy Cross, and bear them against the enemies of their country. Hill and valley will send forth legions of oppressed and murmuring men, whose injuries it will be our happiness to redress; and when the anthem of kingly anointment shall resound in the aisles of Krakow, the prince whose consecration it proclaims must swear at the altar that equal laws and their honest administration shall consolidate the children of the Republic into a Republic indeed.”—

Such were the hopes with which, that night, many a young head lay throbbing on its hard pillow:—such the promises which gave light and life to many a heart long dead to joy:—such the visions that brightened even the gloom of the Jama cabin, so long haunted by the busy fiend of unappeased revenge!—The morrow was to bring

the gathering night of the Puszcza, and the Confederates were already armed, and eager for the struggle.—But the morrow morn brought news to the Zakon Jesuitów that the infirm king had already received the last rites of the church; and those tidings, instead of disseminating through the country the gloom which forms the only panegyric on a dying prince, imparted to the Confederates the promise of instant relief, and roused the partizans of Russia to greater activity.—

Never had the eyes of the inhabitants of the district of Lubloyst fixed themselves so eagerly on the departing day-light, or so languished for the darkness of the night, as on that which was to display the signals of insurgency.—The evening came. The sun, as if jealous of their happiness, sent forth a lurid gleam of deep red light; and the dwellers of the valley, bidden to look towards the high ridge of the forest for the beacon-light announced by Joachim, gazed and gazed towards that western horizon, doubting, wondering and debating whether the glimmering redness were produced by the expiring day, or by the promised signal.—

"Behold!" cried Ignacy to his sons, looking earnestly from the eminence pointed out by Juliusz to his father as the central vista of the forest, "Behold it encreases!—It is *not* sunset! it is no reflection of the evening;—for evening wanes with a slow and steady expiration, and yonder light fleckers and wavers."—

"I see a vapour as of beacon smoke overhanging the spot!"—cried Matiasz, raising his confederatka cap from his brows, with a sentiment of adoration such as a Mede or Persian might have testified towards the luminary of the heavens.—

"I see a tongue of flame curling upward to the skies!"—exclaimed Erazm, bending his knee to earth, and stretching forward his head through the dusky twilight. "HOURRA!—VIVAT!—the day and the hour are come!"—And without rising from his knee, he turned suddenly to the old father, beside him, and pressed his lips again and again in silent gratulation to the toil-hardened hand of the Weglarz.

"Up and onwards!" cried Matiasz. "Lose

not a minute. No longer skulkers in the forest clearing, but in arms for our native country we muster this night at Ostronimptsch.”—

“And thence march to the miasteczko !”—cried Erazm.—

“Cross in hand will the ministers of the Almighty lead ye on,” said Ignacy gravely, as if seeking to moderate the excitement of his two rash boys. “But of this oh ! my sons, be minded : that if again young Juliusz Felinski take station among the Confederates of Lubionki, ye shall behold in him the friend of his country, and not the brother of Konstanty.”—

“And yet the name of Felinski——”

“Is sanctified when borne by a true patriot !”—interrupted the Węglarz in a tone of paternal authority, “Nay, were even his base-minded brother enrolled in the cause of the Holy Cross, there should be a day for duty and an after day for revenge. It is not meet that the cause of God and his saints,—of Liberty and the Republic,—be interrupted and polluted by lewd quarrels or animosities. To parley with the noble brawlers

of Petrikow the hirelings of Muscovy is the business of the Confederates of Lubionki:—to wreak retribution on the betrayer, the business of the Węglarze of the Puszcza. We march, boys, even to the gates of the Diet. There will be leisure hereafter to seek in the wantonness of his wassailage, this minion of the court; and wash out in his blood remembrance of our humiliations.”

“To Ostronimptsch!”—cried Erazm, examining his pistols, and thrusting them into the leathern girdle of his koszula. “Let us conquer ere we decide on the order of victory.”

And ere they reached the cabin, the enkindlement of the Puszcza - beacon was corroborated by many an answering fire on the surrounding heights.—

“Mazowsze is in arms!”—cried the old man waving his arm. “God be her guide and ours—the day of deliverance is at hand!”

CHAPTER XXVII.

In mighty quadrate join'd
Of union irresistible, they move
Indissolubly firm ;—nor obvious hill,
Nor strait'ning vale, nor wood, nor stream divides
Their perfect ranks ; the passive air upbore
Their nimble tread !—

PARADISE LOST.

THE place selected by the Confederates of Lubionki for their last critical rendezvous, was the plain of Ostronimptsch : and about the hour when the cover-fire bell was dismissing to rest the sober inhabitants of Lubloyst,—the first company of the insurgents of Lubionki, who afforded a name to the Union, marched forward in close phalanx ; measuring their advance by the following choral hymn.—

HYMN.

We come, avenging God !—we come,—
Rous'd by no tuck of martial drum ;
No trumpet's tongue, no clarion shrill ;—
The Patriot's heart beats louder still.

We pause—inspiring God !—we pause
To read the table of thy laws ;—
Stern tho' thy priests its hests fulfil,
The Patriot's heart is sterner still.

We swear,—attesting God !—we swear
Thy word within our souls to bear ;
Tho' strong allurements tempt to ill,
The Patriot's heart is stronger still !

We raise, redeeming God !—we raise
Unto thy throne our hymns of praise ;—
Let angel hosts obey thy will,
The Patriot's heart is humbler still.

We go,—protecting God !—we go !—
Nerve thou our arms to crush thy foe !—
To save or slay,—redeem or kill ;—
The champions of thy altars still !—

Ere the Xawerians had taken up their position on the western verge of the plain towards Lubloyst, the foresters of the Puszcza, each

bearing in his hands a beechen bough, whose light leaves rustled with every passing wind,—were joined by a body twice as considerable in extent though accounted of less importance among the thrones and dominions of the Confederation—namely, the hargemen and raftsmen of the Vistula. To these were soon added the malcontents of the suburbs of Lubloyst, to the number of seven hundred men. Each detachment, according to previous regulation, kept itself for the present distinct;—but scarcely had they taken the field, when the trampling of horses was heard in the direction of the village, and a rumour instantly ran along the lines, (for a moment startled at the sound), that Father Joachim and thirteen Brethren of the Zakon, accompanied by the young Panicz of Lublowicz, and two or three discontented burghers of the Miasteczko, were bringing in solemn procession the Banner of the Holy Cross;—embroidered by the holy hands of the Ursulines of Grodno, and forwarded to the Confederation by their Lithuanian Captain-General through the intervention of the Zyd of Lubloyst.

A shout of gratulation rent the air in welcome to the hallowed ensign which, on reaching the centre of the space occupied by the insurgents, was delivered by Father Joachim to the hand of Juliusz Felinski; and an attempt was made to draw up the men into a sort of hollow square that the harangue of the youthful enthusiast, on presenting it to the assembly, might be audible to all present.

But either the novelty of his situation, or the debility of recent indisposition, so thoroughly overcame the self-possession of the youthful enthusiast whose fine figure might have served as a model for Lucifer the son of light, leading forth his cohorts of rebel angels), that a sense of suffocation repressed the exhortation he was about to address to the congregation. Suddenly reining up his horse in the centre of the square, he waved the heavy folds of the banner over his head, shouting aloud the emphatic words, "God and our COUNTRY!"

But the time for oratory was past. There was no longer need of verbal incitement. Each

individual standing on the plain felt the burning spirit astir within him. The electric chain was jarring from link to link; and it was the business of the leaders to subdue, rather than to excite, the passions of their followers.

“’Tis not an hour or a place for niceties of argument,” cried young Erazm from his post at the head of one of the Forest companies, designated as that of the Jama.—“We have already talked too freely and listened too long.—*Let us act!*—The eyes of the besotted Grodski have already fallen upon the blaze of our beacons, to the detriment of his night’s slumbers. Let us follow up the panic;—march straightway to the town;—defeat the ruffianly Hayducks at their post;—possess ourselves of the Ratusz and its records of iniquity;—of the prison gates, and their secrets of shame!”—

“Let the prisoners gyved and endungeoned by this minion of the Saxon Brühl, be set at liberty,” cried Henryk, the forester.

“Tish a shzame an szin for free born mensh to be hovelled down under de stonesh of de Shar-

mack like brute beastsh of de creashionsh," cried Ramon the Jew, whose two brothers were imprisoned for vending spices with false weights.

"Be our first act an act of mercy!" cried old Xawery devoutly.—

"Be our first act an act of *justice*!" ejaculated the Jesuit, amazed to discover that he was no longer able to repress the fierce impulses he had called into action. "To loose malefactors on the community is madness. Once in possession of the town, you will have leisure to enquire into the criminality of the captives, and shew mercy where mercy is due."

"And what if one guilty one escape unpunished," cried Henryk,—“so the innocent go free? The Zydowka Salomea hath been plunged into a dungeon only to satisfy the misgivings of the doting Grodski. 'Tis our duty to rescue those who suffer in the cause of the Confederation."

"To the Ratusz—to the Ratusz!"—cried fifty voices at once, of persons more or less connected with the felons of Lubłoyst.

“To the Ratusz, and welcome!” exclaimed Juliusz Felinski,—his voice enfeebled by sickness assuming a hoarse tone in the exertion.—“But ere we advance, be it remembered that we march in the cause of Freedom—of the people of Poland; and that our first step is decisive. Let our enterprize but assume an aspect of rashness and unadvisedness, and ’tis rebellion to be crushed. Let it proceed with a grave earnestness worthy the object to be attained, and ’tis the first movement of a mighty system of Reform,—well-organized and firmly-intentioned. By re-engrafting on the community the ruffians it has already ejected from its bosom, you court disease and infamy into the very heart of the Confederation;—and if the Commonweal”——

He was interrupted by a general murmur of dissatisfaction. “We meet not now to raise dilemmas of right or wrong,” shouted a ferocious looking man, wearing the dress of a raftsmen of the Vistula. “We are here to act—szabelka in belt,—and carbine on shoulder.—To Lubloyst!—We shall argue better of our further

measures, in the wisdom-inspiring Justice chamber of the Ratusz !”

“ To Lubloyst then ! ”—cried Father Joachim, perceiving with consternation the insufficiency of his influence over the moving mass which, in its state of inaction he had swayed so readily ; as well as the necessity of patient pliancy, in order to maintain his station at the head of the insurgents. And addressing a few hurried words to Juliusz Felinski, to enforce an attempt at marshalment and order which served but to encrease the eagerness and insubordination of the undisciplined crowd,—they set forward ;—led on by the young enthusiast, who had now remounted his horse. The chief object of Juliusz was to repress the fiery spirit he had so often contemplated with admiration. The uproarious tumult of two thousand desperate men,—many of them exhibiting the consequences of their sojournment in the karczma of Ostro-nimptszch, and many more actuated by prospects of plunder and excess,—was a thing so new and appalling to his gentle nature, so much at

variance with his views of the holiness of the cause and the moral dignity of the Confederation, that, as they took their way along the road to the Miasteczko, trampling down the maize-fields on either side, and filling the air with shouts of intemperance far different from the sacred vows breathed while the influence of the Puszcza companies predominated in the Confederation, his very soul thrilled with the consciousness that he had assisted to let loose a devastating torrent on the fair fields of Mazowsze!—

At every step they were met by scouts from the town, who communicated to Joachim the increasing panic of the inhabitants. The alarm bell was already heard at intervals, louder than even the outcry of the insurgents. The Hayducks were in arms. Beacons of encampment blazed fiercely on almost every point of the surrounding heights; and, as the elated Confederates passed under a craggy ridge of gravel overhanging the road, the flames of the resinous pine logs of which the fire was composed threw a fearful glare upon the scythe blades and rude

pikes with which they were armed for the encounter. On reaching this point of their route, Father Hieronymus, to whom was delegated the high distinction of bearing the consecrated banner, checked his mule, and waving on high the rich folds of the embroidered ensign, decorated with the national colours, and bearing the legend "PRO RELIGIONE ET LIBERTATE,"—its emblazons were for the first time distinctly visible to the insurgents.

At the inspiring spectacle, new vigour seemed to animate their souls; and the echo of the loud "Hourra!" that burst by acclamation from the multitude, might have shaken the very foundations of the Ratusz. Brother clasped hands with brother,—friend with friend;—and "Wolność!" — "Swoboda!" — "Polska!" — uttered with various inflexions of encouragement, pride, triumph, and confidence, expressed the ardour of those who went forth in the name of the holy Catholic Church and the Rights of man, to subvert the laws of the kingdom, and trample into dust the humble insignia of the reformed communion.

Far different, meanwhile, was the progress of the disciplined troops which, under the command of Colonel Salkanski and the guidance of Konstanty Felinski, were advancing to the scene of action. The route from the capital lying in a direction exactly opposed to the district included under the influence of the Confederation, no indications were expected to impart further insight into its measures, till they reached the town of Lubloyst, situated on the verge of the Puszcza, and it afforded no subject of surprise to Colonel Salkanski and his companions, that every thing appeared under an orderly and ordinary array in the towns and villages bordering their route from Warsaw to Wielicz. Even at the latter town, a small post station within four leagues of the borders of the forest, not a syllable could be extracted from either the mayor, hayducks, or peasantry calculated to throw light on the subject. Entertaining towards the Lubloyskians precisely the contempt which the inhabitants of a small town ever display towards those of the most considerable in their immediate

vicinity, they were ready to admit that the "people" of the Puszcza were a superstitious and disaffected race;—the "people" of Lubloyst, a set of greedy and rapacious money-getters, looking only to their own advantage;—and the "people" of the navigation, a gang of ruffians. But of the symptoms of a political union among these several degrees of evil ones, they evidently knew nothing.

Czelenszki,—whose purpose it was to take the head of his establishment for the maintenance of civil order, but with due regard to the grievances of the people and the redress of their wrongs,—already began to trust that the depositions of Captain Felinski whom their journey together had revealed to him as a vapouring and empty-headed coxcomb, were exaggerated and unworthy of faith. But Colonel Salkanski found no motive in the absence of further information, to deviate from the instructions he had received previous to his departure from the capital,—to avoid the town of Lubloyst and (making directly by the tannery towards the heart of the Puszcza,) take possession of the

clearing so as to forestal the assembling of the Confederation. Chiefly intent on avoiding any outbreak of insurgency, it was believed that the arrival and occupancy of the troops would sufficiently advertise the rebels that their secret was in the possession of government; and the same precautionary measures being extended to the towns of Wilna and Grodno, and other places which the active investigation of Brühl might convict of participation in the Confederation of the Holy Cross, all overt attempts would probably be abandoned, till the crisis occasioned by the death of the king afforded an opening for new machinations.

The movements of the detachment were accordingly so calculated that the troops might take up their position in the forest at night-fall; and, but for the circumstance that they approached in a direction exactly contrary to the localities interested in their proceedings, it was impossible but that the peasantry must have become aware of the vicinity of an armed force. But hitherto, no check or suspicion had occurred to destroy the self-security

of the Zakon Jesuitów or their disciples.—The main object had been to deceive the vigilance of the Grodski and his satellites, without regard to the higher officials of the Republic. Scouts had been placed in and around the town:—but the necessity of instituting out-posts in the forest, or of directing their observations towards Warsaw, had never once occurred to the Jesuit or his followers. They believed themselves too insignificant in their present incipient stage of existence to have been named in the Assembly of the Rada Nienstająca of Warszawa.

“At present I scarcely make out the object or intentions of this young braggart of Czartorski’s household,” said Colonel Salkanski, taking aside Count Czelenszki, as he was about to quit the detachment and proceed incognito towards Wodarodko. “It strikes me that the tale of this precious plot may be a fable intended to expose to ridicule the credulity of our feeble ministry; and were I not trespassing too much on your lordship’s good will, I would entreat you to defer your visit to Wodarodko, (which

you kindly attribute to a desire to secure refreshment and accommodation for my men) and do me the still greater favour of accompanying me into the forest."

"I would willingly, both in compliance with your desire and the promptings of my own curiosity gratify your request," replied Czelenszki, "more especially as believing that in case of any serious affray, my personal influence with the misguided men so largely indebted to me might be of some avail; but as nothing but instant departure for Wadarodko will enable me to provide for"—

"Let me beg of you," interrupted Colonel Salkanski, "(and did time allow I could offer you a thousand cogent arguments in support of my request) to ride with me at least towards the Puszcza. Thence, if the plan of the country be furnished me correct, it will be as easy for you to reach your residence, as by parting company with us here."

Unable to assign any sufficient motive for refusal, Count Czelenszki acceded to the request of the commandant:—an arrangement productive of

considerable mortification to Konstanty Felinski, who had expected to act as sole guide and prompter of the gallant Colonel, and to reap hereafter the fruits of his officious zeal.

The well-disciplined body of troops which now pursued its line of march towards the forest,—and which was hailed by the few chance passengers encountered by the way as on the road from the Capital to the garrison of one of the frontier towns,—proceeded in orderly array, creating no disturbance and provoking no alarm. It was dusk when, remotely skirting the estates of Lublowicz, the detachment entered the forest.—But the Puszcz companies were already mustering on the plain at Ostronimptsch!—

Two scouts dispatched by Colonel Salkanski, to report upon the aspect of things in the village of Lubionki, returned with intelligence that all was quiet and the inhabitants apparently retired to rest.

“ Let me pray you to observe that there is not the slightest track or indication of any numerous assemblage having taken place in the neighbour-

hood," observed Czelenszki to his military companion. "The state of the road,—the impervious thickets,—the fern breast-high and evidently untrampled by heavier foot than the squirrels springing upward to the beech boughs, convince me that Captain Felinski, by accident or design, has exaggerated the case."

"Suspend your judgment, my lord!" cried Konstanty, overhearing the observation of the young Magnat, and coming flippantly forward. "I pledge my veracity,—my honour,—my head,—that within some quarter of a league from this very spot,—within a few hundred furlongs of the Rock familiarly named in the country, (as the local information of Count Czelenszki may aid me in attesting) the Pillar of Salt,—I will bring you upon a pismire's nest of traitors,—a beaver's colony of forest rebels,—such as will tax the valour, discretion, and firmness of the gallant train we have this night the honour to precede, more than they have been tried since the cannon of old Fritz made day-light in their battalions."

"On then, sir!"—said Colonel Salkanski

sternly ;—"we are here neither to trifle, nor be trifled with. Count Czelenszki !—accept the use of my led charger ; you may find it better trained to the sort of exercise prognosticated by Captain Felinski than the brute on which you are mounted.—Forward !—March."——

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Better I were distract!—
So should my thoughts be severed from my grief,
And woes, by strong imagination, lose
The knowledge of themselves.

LEAR.

DESOLATE are the hours of the captive;—thrice desolate those of the hopeless captive, who, marking through his prison bars the close of every declining day, knows the decree has past which renders his duration and his life a common condemnation. But still more desolate, still more irritating, the reflections of the prisoner whose promised liberty is tantalizingly withheld; and who knows that on the event of that liberation depends the fortunes—the fate—of some beloved or venerated friend.

Such was the condition of Ignacy's unfortunate daughter.—Even in the extremity of her fears for Konstanty, she believed that were *she* only free to plan and act, she might yet be enabled to warn, protect, and save her undeserving lover. Her adroitness of mind and limb, combined with the supernatural dexterity acquired in the exercise of her degrading vocation, inspired her with a notion that *she* could penetrate where others were excluded,—that *she* could convey intelligence where other messengers would be dispirited by the difficulty of the enterprize.—And she could do nothing!—The oaf who had promised to befriend her did not return. The slow hours passed one by one over her throbbing head. Every sound she heard,—(and the movements of the Confederates produced many noises of a strange and startling nature at the Jesuitry,) seemed to announce the coming of her new ally, and the termination of her sufferings.

But several days elapsed, and Nepomucen came not again. Even Father Joachim ceased to visit her. The affairs of the Confederates had

assumed so imposing a shape that Konstanty and his influence appeared of secondary importance ; and Doska secured by bolt and bar from all power of mischief, he cared little for the tears shed by his prisoner, or the imprecations breathed in her miserable cell of captivity. A lay-brother of the order, advanced in years and by his misanthropic nature peculiarly calculated for the task, was deputed to supply her with food, and see that her health bore up against privation and misery ; and from him, her eager inquiries obtained intelligence calculated only to aggravate her distress. At length, in the excitement of the Lubionki Union, even *he* began to neglect his task ; and poor Doska's cruise had long been unrefreshed, and her bitter bread hardened, when young Pulafski, at length enabled by the departure of Joachim and his brethren for the Puszca to penetrate into the interior of the friary, hastened to fulfil his promise of cutting away her gyves, and partially restoring her to freedom !

Scarcely could the excited and irritable girl

control her patience while the clumsy-handed Nep proceeded in his operations.

“I have waited and waited!” cried she, her bosom panting, and her eyes flashing the fire of eagerness,—“and thou camest not.—Lo! my heart is sick;—and in my haste and my solitude have I cursed thee again and again!”

“Thou didst wrong then!”—said the kind-hearted lout, still diligently persisting in his task. “Never believe me, damsel, but I have kept thee in mind, though not in sight—(and yet in sight, for thou wert still in my mind’s eye,) from hour to hour, since we parted. But what could human hand or foot or head do more than stand watching under the friary wall, (for all the world like a stone saint in a stone niche,)—albeit as little of a saint (the saints be praised,) as any lad in Mazowsze?—But *there*, ever and ever, was the vigilant eye of Father Joachim, fierce as that of Sennacherib, the destroyer, in the chapel-tapestry at Wodarodko;—and so——”

“Enough—enough!” cried Doska. “Thou art here at last, and I am grateful.”

“Else wouldst thou wickedly break faith with me,” said Nepomucen, suspending his operations on the last cord of her ligatures. “Saidst thou not to me, ‘Nepomuk Pulafski!’ thou saidst—(Heaven bless the honey-sweet voice that uttered it,)—release me from my bonds, and see with what love and gratitude Doska will reward thee!’—And lo!—my task is in act of fulfilment:—and I wait the result.”

“It cannot be,” cried the Bohemian, writhing as if hoping to burst asunder the last cord twisted round her slender ancles—“that thou hast been moved to this act of humanity by the fancy that I was like to become leman or light o’love to such a thing as thou?”—

“By what else?”—said Nep, resolutely,—and desisting from his task. “For what am I fool enow to bring down the anathemas of yonder most arbitrary and Moses-like dispensator of laws, Joachim the priest,—but for the hope of guerdon such——”

“Enough!” cried Doska, knitting her finely-arched brows, and folding her arms with an atti-

tude of graceful dignity that served only to enhance her beauty in the eyes of Nepomucen.

“On better knowledge of me thou wilt see the danger of heaping insult on one who, nurtured among the wild cubs of the Puszcza, has a heart as fierce as they.”

“Too curiously versed am I myself in Puszcza bear-chase,” cried young Pulafski, with a laugh he intended to be waggish, “to be intimidated by a rough hug, where aught is to be won by labour and perseverance.”—

“Peace!” cried Doska, stamping with her little foot, although still shackled by the cords, as he had seen her when assailed by the Jesuit in the dwelling of the Zydowka.

“Nay, sweet-heart, peace as much as thou listest,—so thou take share in the armistice,” said Nep, in a voice purporting to be insinuating. “Look thee, Doska!—My father has been away this month past, at Riga, on traffic of his hemp harvest of the year. There is none to control me but my parcel-blind shrew of a mother; and so thou wilt shelter with me at some

vassal's homestead, till the old woman can be brought to reason, thou shalt have to boast the fairest head-gear of pearls that money can wring from the treasure chest of Szmuhl and Salomea; and, for thy sport on feast-days, a pacing nag, with a gayer pillion than ever graced the palfrey of the Grodski's daughters."

"Away!" exclaimed the Bohemian, tossing her arms with violence over her head, as if irritated beyond her patience. "Away, fool, or I shall do thee a mischief!"—

"'Tis not in the heart of thee, Doroska!"—

"How knowest thou what is in my heart? Sometimes my very self I know not. But *this* know I, for this I *feel*:—that when another man seeks at my hand that tenderness which shall be my Konstanty's alone so long as life is in our hearts,—my soul turns to fire in my breast, and I dare not guess what violence may spring from its fierceness."

"If Konstanty be all the obstacle that interposes between us," observed Nepomucen, attach-

ing little faith to the protested fidelity of an itinerant mountebank, "my chance is still better than my hopes. Life dances merrily in *thy* heart, my pretty Doska; but for poor Konstanty's, never believe me if it be not colder than the stone sculpturation of St. Ignatius, yonder in the cloister."—

"*How sayest thou?*"—said the poor girl, in a low intense whisper, coming close to Pulafski, and staring wildly in his face.

"Even as thou hearest, damsel!—Konstanty, with all his braggartry, proves a mere mortal like the rest of us;—and, though many are of opinion that he came to his bad end per favour of the long rifle wherewith Erazm and Matiasz the węglarze were so cunning in their birding when the wood-hens were a-wing,—and express—"

"Konstanty—*murdered?*" ejaculated Doska, laying her cold hand on Pulafski's shoulder, and looking so piteously into his eyes that, but for the increasing ardour of his desire to make

her his own, he would scarcely have persisted in his subterfuge.

“Is it news to thee?” was his evasive reply. “Truly thou canst know little of the temper of the Confederates of Lubionki if thou for a minute doubtedst that (being detected prying into their secrets) he had but a short shrift, ere he was laid in as deep and cold a grave as the elks and bisons, who have been lying in the Lithuanian morasses since the sea voyage of our grand-dad Noah.”

The peal of hoarse laughter bursting from the lips of poor Doska upon this heart-whelming intelligence, rang through the vaulted cells of the Zakon, as though the grotesque images noticed there by Konstanty were suddenly endued with impulses of mirth.

“Nay, Doska,—Doska,—’tis no matter for merriment,” cried Pulafski. “Be calm,—Doroska! be pacified;—the rumour may yet prove false!”

But still she laughed louder and louder than before.—

"On my very soul I do yet believe Konstanty lives," persisted Nep, in a pacifying tone. "Never believe me but I do!"—

"Ever, ever, have I vowed that our loves should end in a bridal!" said Ignacy's daughter, with maniacal wildness. "And even as I said, 'tis accomplished. The winter robins will perch on the bed dug for us in the Puszcza of Lubionki, nor dream over what transports of tenderness their soft breasts are brooding.—In the Puszcza?—Sweet Lubionki!—Even as thy early bind-flower twines up joyously to Heaven,—will our souls curl upward and upward and upward amid the verdant branches, till we reach the blue skies at last!—The Puszcza of Lubionki!—Ha!—ha!—ha!—ha! I tell thee—I am going home, fool,—home!"—

"I beseech,—I pray of thee,—fair damsel, be more tranquil," cried Pulafski, extricating his arm from her frantic grasp, and resolved not to proceed further in her liberation till she should attain a calmer frame of mind. "Look thee, Doska!—'tis to-night the gathering of the Con-

federation; and to be absent from the Assembly were to gain the infamy of laggard and coward. I must away, girl!—But while thou talkest and shriekest thus wildly, never believe me if I dare loose thee helpless and friendless into the streets of Lubloyst. The Grodski's Hayducks would clap thee into the readiest dungeon;—or worse still, our Brethren of the Holy Cross who must this night sack and ravage the town, might carbonado thee on one of their watch-fires!—Therefore sweet Doska,—gentle Doska—thou must even bide here the event;—and so soon as the hosts of the Confederation have possession of the Ratusz and my work is achieved, never believe me but I will make way once more through the Confederation vaults of the Zyd's dwelling, and bear thee off to safety.—Dost thou not hear me, Doska?"—

But instead of replying, the Bohemian whose reason was manifestly wandering, began to weave a low melancholy chant, after the manner of the incantations she had been accustomed to improvisate in her former calling.

“ Still together,—still together,—
Storm or strife or summer weather ;—
Puszcza-tenants with the birds,
And the red-deer's sitting herds,
Ranging through the cluster'd trees,
Sporting on the buoyant breeze ;—
Still together,—still together,
Storm or strife or summer weather,
Who so happy, wild and free
As my spirit-love and me ?”

“ Holy St. Winkelried ! how shall I make her aware of her danger !” ejaculated Nep, “ Doska, gentle Doska,—dost mark me ?—The Patriots of Lubionki are approaching, and I must away : but anon, when we have wrought our task, I will be with thee again. Should strange footsteps approach or tumults alarm thee pretty Doska, scud away into the vaults through which thou wast brought hither by Father Joachim,—the rusty-feathered vulture that stooped so fiercely on thy dove-like innocence. Access to the subterranean passage lies behind the pedestal of the statue of St. Ignatius in the western cloister : and never believe me, but thou mayest find as safe hiding among the chests and ammunition barrels, as a field mouse in a furrow.”—

But instead of giving heed to his instructions, Ignacy's daughter sat rocking herself on the edge of her pallet, still wildly and incoherently weaving her melancholy chant.

“Still together,—still together,—
 Storm or strife or summer weather!
 Honey from the clefted tree
 Feasts my spirit-love and me;—
 Hip, and haw, and service fruit,—
 Pig-nut in its Puszcza suit,—
 Bramble-berry, bullace, sloe,
 Earth-pea with its crimson glow,
 Fairy-ripened to requite
 Doska and her spirit-knight;—
 Still together—still together—
 Storm and———”

“Doska,—Doska!—” exclaimed Nepomucen, stopping his ears in despair, “’tis no time for gibbering romances or warbling oracles. Listen, girl,—for thy own and all our sakes;—listen and know that in seeking refuge in the Zydowkan vaults, thou must warily heed lest a spark escape thy lantern-light.—It were as mad a thing as to let fly a rocket into the arsenals of Praga!”—

The afflicted maniac suddenly checked her song, and gazed with a stare of interrogation into the face of Pulafski.—

“Ay maiden,” he repeated, eager to arrest her attention: “I tell thee a single spark falling among the powder-barrels might send thee blazing into the sky;—with the golden treasury of Szmuhl and Salomea tacked like a comet’s tail to thy flight.—Dost hear me Doska?”—

“She hears and heeds!”—replied the Bohemian, writhing her fair frame into a thousand wild contortions. “But what need of spark or lantern?—Doska has borrowed skill of the blind-mole that travels safest by night; or if she require torch-guidance, is not the glimmering glow-worm her bond-servant?”—

“Never believe me if the girl be not as crazy as Nebuchadnezzar!”—cried Nepomucen: “and whether to leave her or take her, might puzzle the great Kopernic himself to determine!—The Brothers have quitted the Zakon;—but surely she may be trusted till our return?—Doroska, sweetest, have I thy promise of discretion?”—

But Ignacy’s daughter was no longer susceptible of interrogation. Having fallen back

on the couch in an absorbing reverie, not a word could be extracted from her lips. Her eye gleamed with the cunning consciousness of insanity, and now and then a shrill, exulting laugh burst from her lips. The young *Szlachcic* who had so unfortunately interfered in her destinies, was eventually compelled to quit the cell and abandon her to her perilous solitude, without any certainty of her means of self-governance.

Such was the train of events that caused *Nepomucen Pulafski* to be wandering in the *Puszcza* long after the gathering hour of the Confederates, uncertain how to shape his course so as to avoid exciting the suspicions of the Jesuit. "Who but we!"—muttered he to himself when, on taking the road to the forest clearing, two horsemen approached his punchy pony. "'Tis manifestly gala-night among our treason-brewers of *Lubionki*.—Jan must mount his nag forsooth as well as *Jakób*;—and never believe me but they take the field as for a *Rokosz* of the *Vola*!—I marvel whether all our confederates are mak-

ing way on four legs towards the Mias-teczko?"—

"Stand!"—cried the foremost of the horsemen, interrupting his soliloquy by pointing a carabine at his breast.—But even when the two men who were in fact scouts from Salkanski's regiment, having succeeded in making him prisoner insisted that he should accompany them to "the commandant,"—he was too infatuated by the idea that the Puszcza belonged to the Confederation, and the Confederation to the Puszcza, to apprehend mischief to his own person.

"Accompany ye, forsooth!—where else should I be riding at this time of night?" cried he.—"I crave pardon for looking on ye strangely; but with all respect be it spoken, Brethren of the Holy Cross! never believe me if I ever beheld your grim persons before.—Ye are doubtless of the Volhynian proselytes, picked up by Father Dionysius in his rambles?"—

"Scant your words, and prick onwards!" cried the dragoon.—"Ye have said already enow to hang a man of twice your inches."—

"Father Joachim shall be apprized of this insolence!" exclaimed Nep. "Were Trazlach my dog in my company, the hound would make short work of dragging from their horses the two unmannerly knaves who tug so hard at his master's bridle-rein!"—

It was not till he actually found himself enclosed by the four squadrons of dragoons who had taken up their position in the clearing, that Nepomucen (whose cogitations had been considerably disturbed by the unlucky result of his communications to poor Doroska,) began to espy any thing unusual or alarming in the affair.

"What fellow is this?"—cried Colonel Salkan-ski, as Nepomucen having been rudely dismounted from his pony, was dragged before him.

"A straggler we met on the road, who gives no good account of himself," said the corporal by whom Pulafski had been captured,—respectfully saluting the commandant.

"What brings you vagabondizing here in the

Puszcza, at this unusual hour?"—inquired Czelenski in a stern voice.

"I never yet heard that the Puszcza road was a forbidden road at any hour of the day or night!" replied the lubber. "Never believe me but myself and my fathers before me, have rode it, night and day, any time this hundred years."

"If it please you, my dear lord!" cried Konstanty Felinski, pushing forward officiously, "this is the very fellow of whom I spoke; the log-witted ass, by whose means the whole plot of the Confederation came to light."

"Konstanty alive!" ejaculated poor Nep; reverting in the midst of all his perils to Ignacy's daughter. "What is astir, among you, friend Felinski; and what means this hugger-mugger of soldiery by moonlight?"—

"Is the prisoner armed?" demanded Colonel Salkanski of the subaltern by whom he was arrested.—"Search him."

"Pistols!"—replied the young officer drawing aside the futro of Nepomucen, and pointing to a huge brace of fire-arms of the dimensions of an

English blunderbuss. "And loaded with buck-shot!" added he, examining and giving them to the hands of the corporal, while Nepomucen's teeth chattered audibly, partly from rage and partly from terror.—

"I pray ye, what do ye take me for, gentles of the sabretache?" cried he, with growing indignation. "Is it to be borne, that a Polish gentleman, a free citizen, should be interrupted in the discharge of his private avocations by a set of—"

"Peace Pulafski, —peace!" interrupted Count Czelenszki, who at length recognized in the prisoner the ill-mannered whelp pointed out to him at the Wodarodko festival as likely to become the bridegroom of the lovely Mineczka Michaëłowska. "Aggravate not the perilous strait in which you stand, by wanton indiscretion of speech. You are accused as abettor in a treasonable conspiracy;—be content with that measure of danger and responsibility."

"From which his sole chance of escape," continued the commandant, "lies in meriting the leniency of the Senate by the amplest disclosures."—

“You are pleased, gentlemen, to take for granted,” observed Nepomucen with more shrewdness than might have been anticipated, “that accusal and conviction are one and the same.—What the doughty hero by your side, (a valiant cavalier whom last week I saw chased through the street at Ostronimptsch by an angry pig, as though Field Marshal Daun’s heavy cavalry were at his heels,) may have found to insinuate in my despite, I will not venture to guess.—But this I tell you frankly, on my own behalf; that were I engaged in fifty conspiracies, of treason fifty fold, neither your menaces nor your cajolements, no!—nor even a squadron of lances at my breast, would win a word from my lips in impeachment of friend or fellow :—no!—never believe me if they would.”

An involuntary murmur of sympathy arose among the men; who, being at length aware of the nature and origin of their expedition, and entertaining a species of professional antipathy to any officer of the Czartoryskian household, looked with considerable mistrust upon Konstanty’s interference.

"You may find occasion, young man, to amend this tone," cried Colonel Salkanski. "Meantime, I again apprise you that your neck is in greater jeopardy than your utmost prudence may redeem, unless by replying in a straightforward way to my interrogations."

"In the first place," interrupted the coxcomb Konstanty, coming forward officiously, "have the goodness, fellow, to acquaint us in what especial spot of this said Puszczka of Lubloyst we are to look for your brethren in disaffection,—self-styled of the Holy Cross?"—

"If *you*, Captain Felinski," replied Nepomucen, with mock dignity, "*you* who hold yourself of gentle breeding and super-exquisite courtliness, know no better than to interrupt this gentleman, (who by his age and epaulets should be your superior, and by the ribbon in his button-hole—a hero)—*I* am of better judgment than to bestow reliance on your unjustified impertinence: ahem!—never believe me but *I* am!"

Again a murmur of approval arose among such of the officers as were within ear-shot of Nepomucen's audacious responses.

"To *me*, then, young Sir, you will perhaps afford the requisite intelligence?" said Count Czelenszki, in a conciliating tone.

"Neither to *you*, my lord Count!" said the lubber. "If the men of whom ye speak be congregated in the cause of Freedom, you—an enfranchiser of serfs,—an abrogator of slavery,—a breaker of bondage—can have nought to urge in their despite; or, if they meet together on behests or pastimes of their own, I can scarce believe that this Muscovite fashion of coming forth to smite with the edge of the sword men of peace who have no armour but their innocence, is of lawful, or laudable institution;—never believe me if I can."

"We lose time in parleying with this doltard!" cried Salkanski;—and at that moment an officer hastily approaching, whispered a few words in the ear of the commandant, accompanied by a gesture which caused him to look upwards to the sky. "Mount, mount!" shouted Salkanski, in reply to the communication; pointing out to Count Czelenszki the lurid illumina-

tion of the clouds to which his own attention had been called. "Tis the reflection of beacons or watch-fires, and at no great distance."

"I am inclined to conjecture," observed Konstanty, unwilling to admit any evidence but that adduced by his own interposition, "that the *węglarze* are at work in the Jama."

"And *I* am inclined to think that thou art a notable ass!" ejaculated Pulafski, in an audible voice.

"The light reflects itself from all sides!" exclaimed Czelenszki, examining the sky. "The impervious shade of the trees alone prevents it from reaching us here."

"Let us make then for the open country," cried the Colonel Commandant, "leaving here a sufficient force to defend the post, should any attempt be made to muster on the appointed spot. We must try the plain of Os—Ostro——"

"Ostronimptszch!" interrupted Konstanty. —"The very place!"

"Once more, young man," demanded Salkanski of Nepomucen, "I demand, at your hands,

confirmation or explanation of Captain Felinski's intelligence. Is it towards the village of Ostro-nimptszch we are to look for the Confederation of the rebels?"—

"Having no clue to whom you intend to apply that name, I am at a loss to answer so paradoxical a question.—I have no experience (the Holy Marya be praised,) in rebel-hunting; but if badger-hunting would serve your Excellency's turn, there's my dog Trazlach, which——"

"To the right wheel,—march!" cried Colonel Salkanski, perceiving an inclination to merriment on the part of Nepomucen's auditors, such as accorded ill with the grave discipline it was his business and pleasure to maintain.—"Corporal Bweczl, remain here with a file of ten men in guard of the prisoner; and on an attempt at escape or rescue, cut him down without hesitation."

"Cut me down?—say rather cut me up!" ejaculated Pulafski, making an effort to spring upon one of the troop-horses, as the regiment defiled into the narrow footway leading to the

Ostronimptszch road. "Comrades! Captain! Colonel!—if there be fighting a-foot, give me at least the standing of a man!—Never believe me if 'tis not the first time I have ever been within sight of a tussle more earnest than a little fancy head-breaking at the Jarmark of Lubloyst. 'Tis cruel to baulk me of my only chance of soldiiership."

"Silence, bother-headed blockhead!" exclaimed Konstanty Felinski, striving to ride against Nepomucen as he proceeded to take his part in their array. "Thou hast already settled thy bull-neck to the halter, as wilfully as the deadliest moper of a Great British November!"

"Silence!"—replied Pulafski, assuming a graver tone when he found himself audible only to Felinski's son. "Silence thyself Captain Konstanty!—I, if worst should ensue, have done no matter of harm to any but myself:—but thou, braggadaccio,—parricide,—fratricide,—hast played Iscariot's part in an affair that will not fail to bring thy brother to the gibbet, and thy father's gray hairs in sorrow to the grave."

But the flutter-brained Felinski heard not the adjuration of the prisoner. Stung by the contumelious demeanour of Count Czelenszki and his military associates, he resolved to leave them to their own guidance; and was already galloping in the direction of Lubloyst, determined to take private cognizance of the mansion of the Zyd; and, if possible, of monopolizing to his own share the honour of further discoveries.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Scarce could they hear or see their foes
Until at weapon point they close.—
They close, in clouds of smoke and dust,
With sword sway, and with lances thrust—
And such a yell was there,
Of sudden and portentous birth—
As if men fought upon the earth
And fiends in upper air ;
Oh ! life and death were in the shout—
Recoil and rally, charge and rout—
And triumph and despair.

SCOTT.

Few spectacles or incidents produce so thrilling an emotion as a midnight conflagration. The imminence of peril to life and property—the dimness of night giving place to a lurid gleam

as if emanating from the orgies of malignant spirits,—the wavering but deepening redness of the sky as if blood-stained by some mysterious crime,—bespeak dismay and consternation!— And thus, the multiplicity of watch-fires that served to light the Confederates to the suburbs of the Miasteczko, served also to raise a correspondent glow of agitation on the sallow cheek of Pan Dzieduszycki, the terrified Grodski of Lubloyst.—

“What means all this!” cried the vigilant Chief Magistrate when summoned to the window by one of his three bony spinsters “Have we incendiarism a-foot?—Light from East,—West,—North,—South—from all points of the compass at once?”

“The effect probably of Aurora Borealis!” said Panna Maruchna, his eldest hope—(a hope of fifty years’ enjoyment.) “My friend, Professor Boguslowski, of the University of Krakow, is of opinion that an atmosphere superabundantly charged with electric matter is——”

“Tysiąc Diablów!—who cares?” exclaimed

the old man, laying aside, in the perplexity of his terrors, a pipe still half unexhausted.

“Or ’tis not impossible,” observed Panna Marysia, the second, (who entertained a standing flirtation with the Crown Surveyor of the Puszcza,) “that the Forest of Lubionki may have taken fire. The knaves of peasants have been seen before now, in the vileness of their sloth, to char a standing pine-tree for terebenthine, regardless of endangering the property” —

“Boh, boh!” cried the old Grodski petulantly. “Stands the Puszcza to our leftward? and see you not how deeply the sky reddens in the direction of the tannery?” —

“I am inclined to opine,” began the third daughter; — but her inclinations and opinions were cut short by the sudden and hurried entrance of the Predco; accompanied by a Hayduck, who, having been accidentally engaged on Excise business at the bark-farm, was the first to notice the kindling of the forest-beacon and the answering fires of the adjoining heights. —

"There is treason on foot and nothing less!" cried the man, wiping from his brow the evidence of his haste.—

"There are strong grounds for believing that the peasants have taken arms," observed the Predco, in a tone of reluctant admission.

"'Tis false!" cried the Grodski. "'Tis a base and mischievous lie. There is not a quieter or more orderly district in any Waivodat of the Republic than this of Lubloyst; as I had the satisfaction of informing His Excellency Count Brühl in the very last letter I had the honour to address him."—

"Assertion is not proof," said the Predco hastily; feeling that, in a contingency so vital to the interests of the state, he must not permit the duty of subordination to a superior officer to paralyze his activity. "What the district of Lubloyst may have been in times past, I take not upon me to decide. What it has been since the young lord of Wodarodko saw fit to encourage misrule and intemperance on his estates, by destroying the frame of their legislation, I

have seen with my eyes, and heard with my ears. When I suggested the arrest of the Zyd and Zydowka, Szmuhl and Salomea, I did it on the strength of information, secretly obtained, that arms had been surreptitiously deposited in their dwelling; and though my search availed not to certify the fact, I have yet reason to believe——”

“ Believe what you list, Pan Predco,” cried the Grodski, “but tax not *my* patience to adopt your believings. Nor stand there prosing and disserting, when perhaps some farm of the vicinity is blazing away like a tar-barrel for lack of assistance. Summon the Hayducks, and away!”

“ Before you issue instruction for the dispersion of the men;” said the Predco still more resolutely, “ I must entreat, I must *exact*, that you visit the belfry of the Ratusz and take a survey of the condition of, the surrounding country.”

“ And by what authority do you——”

“ By the urgent interests of the town in this moment of peril!” cried the Predco, not

giving the old man time to shape his accusation.

“Should a serious movement occur among the people, twice ten hours would elapse ere effective succours could be obtained; and—”

“Arm, arm, in the name of Heaven!” cried Karolek the Hayduck, rushing unceremoniously into the chamber.—“The beacons are treason-signals,—the peasants in arms;—and a vast body of men headed by the doubly damnable Brethren of the Zakon Jesuitów and the boy Felinski, are on their march towards the town!”

“Jezus Marya!”—ejaculated the Grodski, while three piteous shrieks evinced the consternation of the three Lubionkian Destinies, his daughters.—

“Armed say you?” inquired the Predco with an air of consternation.

“With pikes, scythe-blades, bludgeons!” cried the Hayduck. “For Heaven’s love delay not!—within twenty minutes, nay! less,—they will be here!”—

“Jezus Marya!” again ejaculated the Grodski, paler than death, and overwhelmed by a sudden catalepsy of devoutness.—

"Ring the alarum!" cried the Predco, addressing the group of Hayducks and petty officers that now hurried into the room. "Arm yourselves to the utmost,—collect what fire-arms you can,—and gather round you those burghers of the town on whose fealty you can rely. To the Ratusz,—to the Ratusz!"

"The very cry of the insurgents!" cried another Hayduck, who had just made his appearance. "They march in haste and disorder, with a view to attack the prisons."

"Lo!—I will arm myself with the sling of David,"—faltered the Grodski, trembling in every limb, "and go forth to meet these Philistines!"—

"Better tarry here," cried the Predco, observing that the three ancient damsels, having enlaced their arms, were clinging around him. "A man may be a Nestor in council, yet no Achilles in the field; and *I*, by half your years your junior, may best encounter a peril your grey hairs would only aggravate."

"Felinski,—Michaëlofski,—Pulafski,—all away,—all absent!" faltered Dzieduszycki.

"To the Ratusz!" again exclaimed the Predco, quitting the room, followed by all the Hayducks; while the chief magistrate sank into a chair, bewildered by his own perplexities.

But already they were late in the field.—They had scarcely time to fortify themselves in the old Gothic guard-room, when an encreased tumult on the air,—a tumult which not even the brattling of the toscin or the uproar of the startled townsmen rushing forth clamorously from their habitations, could overpower,—announced the near approach of the insurgents.

"The ruffians have enrolled themselves in a regular Confederation!" cried one of the Hayducks, while labouring in execution of the Predco's commands for the fortification of his grim old citadel.

"A Confederation amounting to hundreds and thousands!"—cried another, grinding his teeth, as he assisted to remove the weighty chest containing the archives of the town to a place of security.

"And a tight job have they in hand for us!"

"They come,—hark!"—

"The trampling of feet,—ay! and even of horsemen!"—

“The sky grows brighter and brighter!”—
ejaculated another. “Have they fired the town?”—

“They dare not!”—

“They dare *all* who have set their lives on such a cast!” replied the Predco, having stationed himself at the only window of the hall which was not closely barred up in preparation for an attack.

“Is the guard doubled at the prison portal?”—

“Barcz and five of his men are stationed well armed within.”

“They will doubtless sack and plunder the town!” faltered a burgher, horror-struck at the necessity of abandoning the guardianship of his own dwelling in support of the Ratusz; and soon a deepening roar, proclaiming the arrival of a mighty populace, invested this declaration with new terrors in the ears of his companions.—Occasional shouts, and at length a tremendous tumult animating the very atmosphere into life, proclaimed the struggle to be at hand:—the tumult of a thousand uplifted voices, mingled into one hoarse yell of execration.

The person who, as leader of the host, first

made his appearance in the Rynek, was Juliusz Felinski ; still on horseback, but encumbered with groups of men clustering round him with petitions to be admitted into the Confederation without probation or oath of allegiance ; and it was seen by the frequent waving of his hand, partly in entreaty, and partly in command, that the youthful hero had some difficulty in repressing the vehemence of his partizans.

All order of array was already at an end. Although no obstacle had presented itself to their entrance into the town, the insurgents, whose meetings had been hitherto stealthy and tranquil, were too much elated by the novelty of their position and the excesses to which it had already given rise, to preserve the subordination inculcated by their leader. Already in their progress through the suburb, the distilleries had been attacked and plundered. The barge-men and navigation-company, saturated with Vodka, now rushed forward in utter disorder ; while Father Hieronymus, unaccustomed to the duties of standard-bearer, was overwhelmed by the

crush of the contending tide. It was the policy of such among the Confederates as were interested in the attack upon the prisons, and the still more dangerous class intent on inciting a general spirit of violence as a mask to their bad intentions, to create confusion by promoting disunion among the several companies of the Confederation.

“There is not much to fear,” observed the Karolek to the Prêdco, having taken a cautious survey of their proceedings. “No more order or system among them than among a swarm of midges in the sunshine!”—

“Who spoke of scythe-blades and spontoons?” cried another Hayduck, as the Puszcza company, —in a closer phalanx than the rest of the tumultuary throng, and still bearing their forest ensigns, —appeared in the Rynek.—“Behold, they make war upon us with beechen boughs, like dairy-wenches driving their kine to the milking stool!”—

“May the herd they hold so cheap prove fierce as the urus-bulls of Rykitka!”—ob-

served the Predco. "But for all that yet appears, a few vollies of blank cartridge discharged over the heads of the multitude, may still bring them to reason. I will address them from the window."

But no sooner did he present himself and attract the notice of those nearest to the Ratusz, than a howl was raised such as must have overpowered the most stentorian lungs; and a volley of stones was instantly discharged at the window, one of which laid open the cheek of the Predco. Without waiting for orders, a dozen Hayducks now rushed forward, and discharged their carbines over the heads of the people; and the riot and confusion following the alarm caused many a gentle heart in the Miasteczko to tremble with consternation. The doubts of the official junta in the Ratusz were speedily solved respecting the arms carried by the Confederates; for a considerable discharge of musquetry answered the challenge of the Grodski's body-guard of Hayducks. The men, irritated as well as surprised, now fired with intent of mischief; and, at the

very next volley, Juliusz Felinski was seen to drop wounded from his horse!—In the uproar that ensued, the Predco could no longer distinguish the measures or intentions of the assailants;—and before the smoke cleared away or the uproar subsided, the prison gates had been forced;—Barcz and his companions desperately wounded, and the prisoners set free to attach themselves to the hosts of their deliverers!—

The trembling burghers, ensconced within the citadel, were firmly persuaded that the violent outcries which rent the air proceeded from the spoliation of their private dwellings, and announced the demolition of their property. But the preconcerted signal of a trumpet-call now startled the tumultuous throng of the Confederates into sudden stillness;—their uplifted arms fell powerless, and their struggles ceased as by preternatural influence. The excitement was suspended; and, when the smoke partially cleared away above their heads, the banner of the Confederation, with its glowing Cross, was seen fixed beside the basin of a granite fountain,

gracing the centre of the Rynek; surrounded by a company of Foresters, bearing blazing pine-logs in their hands.—Elevated on the margin of the fountain, stood Father Joachim:—his portly figure, sternly pre-eminent, was habited in the robes of his order, but distinguished by the badge of a crimson cross embroidered on the breast;—while by his side, and addressing him with energetic and almost frantic gesticulation, was the Zydowka Salomea,—rescued by the insurgents from her dungeon and avouching in her disarray the violence of the struggle!—The gray hair streaming from her coiffless head,—her withered cheek, streaked and stained with blood,—her eyes, glaring with ferocity,—and the awful imprecations bursting from her lips,—befitted her for the impersonation of an Até stirring up the evil passions of the multitude!—

Putting the furious Jewess peremptorily aside, the Jesuit, now addressed himself in a bold and energetic tone to the Grodski Dzieduszycki, whom he supposed to be in command of the company engaged in defence of the Ratusz;

of the nature and extent of which, the assailants without could form no just estimation.

“Old man!”—cried the Jesuit, apostrophizing the chief Magistrate of Lubloyst, “you are hereby called upon in the name of the Confederation of the Holy Cross,—Champions of Polish liberty and foes to Muscovy and her partizans,—to surrender your charge into their hands. Give us instant possession of the Ratusz and Tribunals of Lubloyst;—or abide the consequences of further contumacy. Reflect that your obstinacy stimulates the passions of the already excited multitude;—that you expose to imminent peril the lives and properties of your fellow-citizens. Behold!—a multitude of two thousand armed men is gathered against you. Advance fearlessly to the window, and survey our preparations.—Fear nothing!—By the mere uplifting of my finger I can stay this vast congregation from any purpose of violence.”—

“Traitor and miscreant!” said the Predco, raising his hand in a menacing attitude, as he presented his ensanguined person at the window in

reply to this bold address. "I charge you in my turn, to dismiss to their peaceful dwellings the misguided men, your followers; and in the name of the King and Republic of Poland, do hereby attain you of treason to the state."

"You refuse to obey my summons?"—demanded Father Joachim, not deigning to notice the terms of his harangue.

"I do not even give it hearing!"

"Predco of Lubloyst!—I demand of you, for the last time, to surrender and unbar to the chiefs of the Confederation of the Holy Cross the gates you have illegally closed against the access of the inhabitants of the district!" shouted the Jesuit.

"A plotting priest and deluded boy!—Appropriate chiefs for a National Confederation!" cried the Predco disdainfully.

"He reviles our chiefs,—he insults our Captain!—Fire the doors!" cried a portion of the rabble consisting of the bargemen of the Vistula and the released felons now added to the unruly group. And without regard to the restraining voice of Father Joachim, the men who had stood

round his person with lighted pine-torches in their hands while he addressed the Synod of the Ratusz, now pressed forward towards the door;—the wooden frame-work was instantly covered with combustible matter, and tongues of flame were soon seen creeping up the shutters of the lower windows.—A fuse of tow steeped in burning resin was even projected into the Justice Hall.

“They fire the building!—Must we be grilled at our post?” cried the terrified burghers.

“The Ratusz is in flames!” exclaimed the Hayducks.

“We shall be compelled to submit to the terms of these ruffians!”—sighed the supervisor of Excise,—approaching the Predco with an air of supplication.

“Never!” said the brave man, resolutely. “Let us die here at our post, in the service of the Republic whose bread we have eaten, rather than give way before a gang of priest-besotted traitors! Young Felinski has already fallen: and Johann, our fleetest express, is by this time half a league from Lubloyst, on his road to the garrison. By day-

break, succours will be despatched to our rescue. Be firm,—and all is well!”—

“He cares for nought but the gratification of of his own selfish vanity!”—grumbled one of the burgesses apart.

“He wants to work his way to the Grodski-ship!”—exclaimed Karolek the Hayduck, lending an ear to the roar of the populace, which just then appeared to burst forth with redoubled violence.

“Vivat, — vivat!” — cried the Predco, who though somewhat stunned by his wound, had been carefully noticing the varying indications of the moment. “We are safe!—I hear the trampling of troopers; by what miracle vouchsafed to our assistance, Heaven’s mercy best can tell.—Hark! the bugle-call of onslaught!—Behold!—Behold. The glorious Hussars of the Lithuanian regiment! —VIVAT! VIVAT!”—

And to the utter amazement of the Predco, burghers Hayducks and miscellaneous congregation of loyalists assembled in the Ratusz, a regular charge was made upon the astonished and

yelling multitude, by a squadron of the best disciplined dragoons in the kingdom!—The flames, slowly consuming the window and door-frames of the Ratusz, added a fearful reflection to the gleaming sabres and brilliant accoutrements of the men, as sword in hand they bore down upon the resolute populace.—

The first charge, indeed, appeared decisive. The Confederates, whose attention was engrossed up to the very moment of attack by the proceedings at the Ratusz, were no less overwhelmed by this sudden inundation than if Heaven had poured down an armament to trample them into dust. Already, too, confusion had wrought disunion among them. The Puszcza Company, a tribe differing widely in views and aspirations from the riotous multitude, (disgusted by the violation of private rights practised in the plunder of the Jewish distillery, and by the firing of the Ratusz which it was their desire to convert into the head-quarters of the Confederation,) had already retired from the Rynek; and the half-inebriated and awe-struck Chlopstwo form-

ing the majority of the populace, terrified by the aspect of their military assailants, fled like sheep from the charge. Father Hieronymus and the banner of the Confederation disappeared. Shouts of triumph were followed by yells of terror and groans from the men trampled by the chargers or bleeding under the sabres of the Lithuanian Hussars. Within five minutes, the military were in possession of the Rynek; and the Confederates forced into the two narrow streets that terminated its angles!—

But the first panic over, a body of picked men more efficiently armed than the rest which had been assigned by Father Joachim to the command of Henryk the Strasnik and Erazm the dauntless son of Ignacy, retracing their steps, astonished in their turn the exulting soldiers of Colonel Salkanski by an efficient discharge of musquetry dislodging many a bold Hussar from his saddle; while others of the Lubionkians, who had forced their way into the dwelling-houses surrounding the Targ, poured down upon them an irregular fire, still more annoying. — Count Czelenszki,

having already obtained from the brave Salkan-ski a promise that quarter should be granted to the misguided men, (dupes of a cunning traitor,) as far as was consistent with his duty to the Republic, now despaired of preserving the offenders from a general massacre ; and having dismounted from his horse, and forced a way through the smouldering doors of the Ratusz, hastened to confer with the Grodski or his representatives touching the numbers, means, and dispositions of the rioters ; and the readiest mode of effecting a parley with the chiefs of the Confederation. Konstanty Felinski, who (expecting to find his father and Michaëlofski in council with the civil authorities of the Miasteczko) had undertaken this branch of duty, was not yet visible on the scene of action ; and the good, humane, and self-convicted magnat of Wodarodko would not sacrifice another minute or another life to the expectation of his arrival.

Rushing up the stairs, he found a body of Hayducks, carbine in hand, prepared to resist the anticipated attack of the insurgents ;—and, after

a moment's explanation, was suffered to enter the Hall of the tribunal, where the Predco, half-fainting from loss of blood and propped in a chair, still attempted to issue his commands to the men.—

Feebly raising his arm with a cry of triumph, as the young Count, whom he regarded as a harbinger of rescue to the Miasteczko, entered the room, he attempted to raise himself from his seat, and advance to meet the magnat of Wodarodko. But at that moment, an explosion as of an earthquake, shook the very foundation of the building and precipitated him to the ground!—Czelenszki himself,—struck on the breast by one of the burning rafters forced by the shock with awful violence into the chamber,—lost all sense of the fearful scene in which he bore a part, and lay stretched insensible by the side of the Predco of Lubloyst.

CHAPTER XXX.

Men who believe they never can be free
Unless by *fighting* for their Liberty;
By their own lawless clamour and complaint,
Invite coercion, and enforce restraint.

CRABBE.

“TRUST me, my worthiest friend, I shall never lament me of the journey, nor even of my needless alarms, since they have been the means of restoring friendship and good fellowship between us!”—said Eustachy Felinski to his neighbour of Wraniczko; as they sat together at their noon-day meal, in a small karczma adjoining the ferry over the Vistula,—a post station nearest to

Wielicz,—on the morning succeeding the eventful night of whose direful results they were at present so little apprehensive.

“I ever told you that we should bring back news of Konstanty’s safety,” replied Michaëlokski, swallowing a sufficient ladleful of smoking Barszcz;—“and whatever may be the cause of the wondrous promotion intimated by the Podstarości of the Czartoryski palace, (that the young Captain, forsooth, is now boon-companion to his Highness on his journey to Petrikow,) it can bode only new honours to your son. Wherefore, my good friend and neighbour, should you on this new foundation erect fresh projects for his preferment, and repent the contract on which we have entered upon the strength of young Pulafski’s retractation,—”

“Away!”—interrupted Felinski. “’Tis an imputation on my honour to advert to such a contingency. Mineczka is the fairest and wealthiest, as well as the most virtuous and gentle of our Lubloyskan damsels;—and what further dare I covet for my son?—With a blameful partiality,

I own I could wish she had looked with an eye of preference on one who would have loved her better—inasmuch as he would have loved her beyond the light of his *own* eyes,—even Juliusz, my noble youngling. But this is no longer to be thought of. The maiden has made her election ;—my son, as you inform me, has spoken his pretensions ;—and you and I, Michaëlokski, have now clasped hands on the contract. Henceforward the affair has only a bright side in my eyes.”

“And so soon as the churl Pulafski can be moved to restore my pledge, the roofs of the old farm shall ring merrily with the bridal !”—cried Michaëlokski, raising his glass and pledging a health to the young couple. “Konstanty is a jot more city-bred than I would have desired in a son-in-law ;—but then my girl has a voice and a smile of persuasion to win over a mill-stone to her side : and we shall soon find the young wife weaning him from the fopperies which, after all, my old friend, are but the tinsel on the mantle of youth.—New ties, new faculties !—Konstanty, a

husband and a father, will become a sober citizen; and according as the sage Lycurgus in his institutes——”

“Is not yonder Szmuhl, the Zyd of the miasieczko dismounting from his mule?”—interrupted Felinski, looking earnestly from the casement. “It may chance that he journeys from Lubloyst, and can give me tidings of Juliusz.”

“I would scarcely lend faith to *his* news of the sailing or sinking of a coble-boat!”—cried Michaëlokski. “What word of trust ever issued from the foul mouth of a dog of Israel?”—

“Nay,” replied Felinski. “God’s judgments are severe upon the scatterlings,—for against God did they rebel!—But we, his servants,—we who are also children of wrath,—are we justified in dealing the bolts of reprobation on the head of a fellow-creature?—Szmuhl!” he cried, looking forth from the casement—and beckoning to the Jew, who approached cringingly on the summons of the wealthy Szlachcic of Lublowicz. “What cheer from Lubloyst?—Know you aught of the welfare of my son?”—

"I come, gracious sir, from the Salitarnia, whereof your poor servant is the director and lessee," replied he, uncovering his shaven crown, while the light summer breeze that played on his sallow cheek raised not the long pendent locks hanging (after the fashion of the Jews of Poland,) on either side his face. "But though news have I none of home or kindred, a mighty word hangs upon my tongue. Some hours ago I encountered on the Wilna road a courier from the city."

"We ourselves journey from Warsaw," cried Michaëłowski, impatient of his friend's colloquy with one of the detested race.

"But scarcely with a courier's speed, gracious Szlachcic!" — persisted Szmuhl, cowering lower than before.—"The fellow of whom I spake was travelling like the arrow of the winged lightning, to convey intelligence of our Sovereign's decease."

"THE KING!"—ejaculated Felinski.—

"Is with the King of kings!"—resumed the Zyd. "Augustus of Saxony no longer reigns in Poland."

"And Keyserling?" exclaimed Michaëłowski.

But the Jew had no leisure to reply. The attention of all parties was arrested by an intemperate jangle between two horsemen having ridden into the stable from the ferry; who were mutually asserting a claim to the first and best horse of the post station. Both, it appeared, were government couriers.

"I tell you," cried one, "I am the bearer of a despatch from his Excellent Lordship the Primate Bishop, now by the Grace of God Regent of Poland."

"And I tell you," cried the other, "I am on a mission of special import from Count Brühl, the Regent's regent. — Moreover, if you have the heart of a man, dispute not my claims; for 'tis a matter of life and death."

"My errand is of no less import!" cried the first, "being a recal to the troops despatched two days ago under Salkanski, to suppress with the edge of the sword the insurrection of Lubionki."

"The Confederation of Lubionki!" ejaculated Szmuhl, involuntarily dropping the caul-cap he held in his hand.

"The Confederation of Lubionki!"—exclaimed Felinski, staggering to a seat.

"Jezus Marya!—what means all this?" cried Michaëlokski.—"Has Czelenski's tree of good and evil already borne such fatal fruit!"—

"Stop them,—in God's name stop them, and obtain further tidings!"—faltered Felinski to his friend;—while the Zyd, apprehending further interrogation on his own part, quietly remounted the mule he still held by the rein; and instead of halting as he had purposed for rest and refreshment, slunk away towards the by-road which would convey him quickest to Lubloyst.

"Both have been furnished with fresh horses," cried Michaëlokski, "and are about to start!"—and rushing to the door, he had scarcely time to lay his hand on the bridle of Lubienski's courier. But even the florin insinuated into his hand, procured only the barren information that the peasantry of the Puszcza of Lubionki were in a state of rebellion;—that a detachment of dragoons had been dispatched from Warsaw to put down the insurrection; and that the Primate

now president of the council, had made it the first duty of his office to issue a proclamation of general amnesty, provided the leaders were given up to justice, and that their misguided followers laid down their arms.—

“ Away then,—away with all speed !” cried the agonized Felinski, on hearing their communications. “ Detain them not for the utterance of another syllable !”—and sinking back in his chair he lifted up his voice and wept aloud. But so far from conjecturing the share his hearth and household held in the promises of the proclamation, his tears were tears of thankfulness,—that while Ignacy the Węglarz and many other fathers of the district beheld their sons involved in the terrors of detected treason, his own prompt tenderness had extricated from peril his beloved Juliusz ; while Konstanty, instead of a dangerous encounter with the desperadoes of the Jama, was honoured with the friendship of his noble patron of Pulawy, and on the eve of a prosperous betrothment with the gentle maiden of Wranciczko !—

“And why, I pray you, (for 'tis plain, friend Felinski, that you had previous insight into the matter,) why have you kept this thing in mystery from me?”—said Michaëłowski. “The peasants in arms?—Perhaps some of my own knaves of Chlopstwo, profiting by my absence, join in their outrages!—Why—why, Felinski, kept you this matter a secret from your friend?”—

“Grieve me not by persisting in the inquiry!” replied the farmer, mournfully waiving his head. “I had personal motives for concealment.—But our meal is ended;—our inducement homeward of redoubled emergency. Let us to horse and away for Lubloyst,—for home—for Lublowicz,—for Juliusz!”—

“And have you neither a thought nor a word for my daughter, who soon shall be your own?—What think you may have been the hap of my poor Mineczka, if indeed my Wraniezkian peasants have been deluded into joining the Confederation?”—

“Speak not of so dread a thing!”—said his

companion, shuddering. "Knew you as I do the desperate courses of these rebels"—

"You shall not alarm me!" cried Michaëlokski. "Firstly, I have all cause to count upon the fidelity of my household. Secondly, in the emergency of any popular disturbance, it would be Father Joachim's first care to remove my precious child to the security of the Carmelites."—

"The security of a sheepfold against the preying of a herd of wolves!" cried Felinski. "And Father Joachim as her watch-dog?—There breathes not in Poland so foul a traitor,—so insidious a breeder of mischief!"—

"It is then as I thought," mused the farmer of Wraniczko.

"And since the leaders of this sedition are to be given up in example and warning to the kingdom, pray Heaven the sacrifice of yonder cunning Jesuit's head may yield sufficient atonement," cried his agitated companion.—Little did Felinski imagine that the courier of Brühl and the Primate had been already outstripped by a secret mes-

senger, bearing from the leaders of the Russian party to the Zakon Jesuitów such offers of preferment and protection as not only secured the safety of Father Joachim, but attached the future services of this champion of Polish Freedom and the cause of the Catholic Church,—to the cabinet of St. Petersburg!—Little did he foresee that the man he fancied predestined to the block, would live to be inscribed in that goodly company of confessors,* which completed the subjugation of the last King of Poland; or that the spirit of patriotism evoked among the peasantry of Mazowsze, on whose previous and inherent existence he had artfully grounded the machinations of his order, would smoulder in inextinguishable power till roused into new vigour by the Confederation of Bar, and the gallant enterprize of Kosciuszko.

Meanwhile every mile of their remaining journey was a work of toil and anxiety to the two fathers. Their way-worn beasts were scarcely equal to so speedy a resumption of their

* Of the forty confessors of Stanislas Augustus, the greater number were Jesuits.

travel; and although at Wielicz they obtained fresh horses, the confirmation *there* received of the news from Warsaw, accompanied by rumours of a serious struggle the preceding night between the military and the people, did but fearfully encrease their disquietudes.—

“I will cut short across the pastures to Lublowicz, without entering the town,” said Felinski in a low voice to his friend, as they approached within a quarter of a league of Lubloyst.

“And *I* will take the Puszcza road to Wranczko,” replied Michaëloksi; “pausing a moment at your gate to learn that all is well.”

Again they relapsed into silence; and although when each occasionally uttered a few words to the other, it was in encouragement and mutual assurance that they and theirs could be in no way concerned in the event, yet Michaëloksi was not surprised when they reached a sandy portion of the road that muffled the stepping of their horses, to hear deep sobs bursting from the breast of his companion.—

“My heart sinks within me!” faltered the

old man, as they approached the farm so near as to discern through the twilight its dim plantations, its white walls, its homely stacks and barns, all-tranquil in their usual rustic seclusion. "It needs to love and build our hopes upon a child, as tenderly as I upon my Juliusz, to appreciate the terrors now fluttering in my bosom."—

Alas!—The first objects that struck him on entering the precincts of the farm, were military accoutrements hanging in all directions on the palings.—The stable was filled with troop horses;—and as the two farmers dismounted, they were roughly shouldered by the hussars in possession of the place!—

Felinski laid his hand heavily on that of his companion, silently pointing to the ground as they entered the kitchen where the soldiers were carousing. Although ashes were profusely scattered on the floor, a track of blood was distinctly visible towards the hall;—and the old man doubted not, as he staggered towards the door, that the blood beneath his feet was the precious

life-blood of his child!—And lo!—while his soul sunk heavy within him,—and a murmur as of struggling emotions and contending horrors perplexed his ears,—the dragoons carousing round his dishonoured board were passing ribald jests, and roaring Bacchanalian songs of triumph!—

CHAPTER XXXI.

He reached the chamber : and his eyes behold
All that his heart believed not, yet foretold.—

BYRON.

BUT Felinski as yet apprehended not half his misfortunes. The hall he now threw open was illuminated with many tapers. But amid the unnatural brilliancy of the scene, there was a stillness as of death ;—and, though that narrow space contained all that was dear to him on earth,—although his sons,—yea ! *both* his sons were there,—their breath was not on the air, nor their shadow on the wall !—

Close beside the door stood the aged Katarzynka, with the handmaidens of the farm ranged in silent array by her side:—the fixed torpor of grief, pourtrayed in her face, being far more eloquent than words to the apprehensions of the heart-stricken father. At some distance, Szatzka and Blazek of Wraniczko were kneeling before a temporary Calvary, affixed against the wall; and at the upper extremity of the chamber stood a bed, (dragged thither for some inexplicable purpose) beside which sat the daughter of Michałowski,—pale, cold, and rigid, as a marble effigy,—on whom their sudden entrance produced neither change nor movement. At her feet was the favourite wolf-dog of young Pułafski; but instead of starting up, after the wont of his nature, to resist the approach of strange footsteps, the poor brute lay extended there immoveable, as though aware that the business of his life was over!—

The old man saw the sentence of his destiny inscribed, as by the finger of God, before his eyes;—nor did his pulse quicken or his breath

shorten as with a grave and resolute step he traversed the chamber and stood beside the bed. *There* indeed lay Juliusz,—cold,—death-stretched,—death-pale;—but lovely, as in a sleep whose dreams are soothing. Like all who perish by gun-shot wounds, there was languor in his countenance;—like all who perish young,—there was the promise of Heaven upon his brow.—The rich auburn hair was not yet matted to his fine forehead by the dews of death; and those who loved him might gaze upon his beauty, and fancy that the breath of life was suspended, not extinguished, on his lips.—

But what was the mysterious thing enwrapped in a bloody sheet, that lay beside him:—over which the cold hand of Mineczka was extended in involuntary guardianship?—

Alas! it needed not to enquire!—But one thing had she loved,—but one earthly form had she cherished with the passion of attachment originating such grief as the grief depicted in her face;—and a *right* of possession was marked in the pertinacity with which she laid her hand

upon that fearful object, as though to protect it from further injury from the rude soldiers whose merriment echoed in her ears. It was—it could be none other than the idol of her youth,—the husband her heart had chosen,—the eldest-born of the bereaved Felinski!—

The mangled remains of Konstanty, extricated from the ruins of the Zydowka's dwelling—(blown to atoms by a sudden and mysterious explosion during the outrages of the preceding night) were indeed gathered there in preparation for their last abiding-place: and when Felinski vainly attempted to raise the linen from the defeated corpse, he found that gentle hands had forestalled the attempt;—that Mineczka's faithful tenderness had exerted itself to sew the fatal winding sheet round the mangled body of her lover!—

“Disturb it not—disturb it not!”—faltered the agonized girl, starting as with a sense of pain on beholding another touch than her own profane the dead. “’Tis all that an avenging God hath left me!”—

“My sons,—my brave sons!”—cried Felinski

with a broken voice, fixing his eyes upon the bed, while Michaëlofski enfolding his heart-broken daughter in his arms vainly attempted to soothe her anguish. "One only question, *one*—one only—and I have done!—They fell in opposing factions,—my young soldier—my patriot boy.—Fought they hand to hand—died they with the guilt of fratricide upon their souls?"—

"Juliusz fell nobly and like a hero, defending sword in hand the liberties of his country," murmured the object of his faithful tenderness, pointing to the broken hilt of the Karabella that lay beside him. "A mysterious and less honoured fate awaited his brother. But, by the blessing of Heaven, no encounter chanced between them in the struggle."—

"Enough!" said the old man;—"enough—enough!"—And, kneeling down on his knees beside the couch,—while Michaëlofski pressed his widowed daughter to his bosom and wept aloud,—he bowed his aged head on the clay-cold feet of Juliusz, and prayed that his spirit might be with God!—The ruin of his house was indeed

complete!—But his hair was gray, — and his eyes dim;—there was not much longer to abide its desolation!—

* * * *

The aspect of the little town of Lubloyst, on the following day, was one of dread accompt to the originators of such widely extended evil. The Ratusz blackened, defaced, and in part destroyed, stood like a sepulchral monument in the deserted Rynek. The windows of every house were broken;—the stone fountain lay overthrown from its base;—and in many places the pavement was stained and clotted with blood. The bells of the church and convents were tolling for the burial of the dead; the solemn Requiem of the “*De Profundis*” echoed through the streets;—in the suburb, where the Jewish factory had been converted into a lazaret for the wounded military, a heap of ruins extended from the dwelling of Szmuhl towards the friary of the Zakon Jesuitów;—but the ignition of the ammunition therein deposited remained a mystery. Nepomucen Pulafski, who alone could have revealed

the secret of Doska's incarceration and frantic condition, was no more; having been slaughtered in an attempt at escape. But even *he* knew not that Ignacy's daughter, concealed in the vault beneath the dwelling of the Zyd, and startled by the trampling of numerous footsteps which she imagined to be those of the Confederates of Lubionki—the assassins of her Konstanty,—had, in the frenzy of the delusion, cast the light from Pulafski's lantern among the barrels, involving herself and her unsuspecting lover in one dreadful and common destiny!—

And from these evils, the arch origin of all,—the Jesuit,—had managed to escape!—Secure in the promises held out by the Czartoryski or Poniatofski faction, he was already on his road to Grodno; and Count Czelenszki, in publishing to the miserable remnant of the Confederation the proclamation of amnesty vouchsafed by the venerable Primate, was aware that the article respecting the delivery of the ringleaders was no longer in their power of accomplishment.

All parties in the state had motives of their

own for wishing this mysterious out-burst of disaffection to be leniently visited, and dismissed without an over-careful scrutiny; and all parties in the district of Lubloyst were beguiled with hopes that a new order of things was at hand, and that the election of the venerable Branicki to the vacant throne would shortly tranquillize the discontents and appease the claims of Poland.—The serpent's head was crushed.—The bravest and boldest of the Confederation were in their graves;—and the most active and efficient banished forth from the province.

“And I, even I, by my wayward interference with the laws of the land, have been the unwitting inciter of all these troubles!”—mused Count Czelenszki;—when, having dismissed his idle train of foreign servitors and laid aside the visionary speculations of his youth, he hastened to take up his abode at Wodarodko. “My means of fortune enable me indeed to build anew the breaches of Lubloyst;—to create institutions for the enlightenment of the district and the maintenance of good order among its population;—for

henceforward I will reside among the people whose labour is the source of my opulence, and whose best virtue, their glowing love of liberty, has hitherto been tinctured by the grossness of ignorance and superstition. Precept and example shall train them to better means of service to their country.—But who shall recal the past;—or bring back the dead to the homes I have rendered desolate?—The new Grodski promises well for the consolation and care of the miasteczko;—but for the widow,—the orphan,—and above all, for the desolate hearths of Wranczko and Lublowicz, what avails his aid or mine?—Years will pass;—and the gap occasioned in the district by this waste of human life must yet be apparent in the land. And though brighter days are dawning for Poland,—and though the hope of future independence emanates even from the lawless flames of rebellion, — yet should the banner of the White Eagle soar anew in the sunshine, neither time nor tide nor change will avail to efface from the memory of the people of Lubloyst the image of the young hero whom

they loved,—(the hero who should have lived to become a blessing to his country!)—struck down in an obscure struggle by a hand unknown;—or obliterate the fatal—fatal destinies of the CONFEDERATION OF LUBIONKI!”—

THE END.

THE
MILL OF MARIEMONT;
OR
THE FORTUNES OF STANISLAS.

**Lo ! Danger, like an ague, subtly taints
Even then when we sit idly in the sun.**

SHAKSPEARE.

THE MILL OF MARIEMONT;

OR THE

FORTUNES OF STANISLAS.

CHAPTER I.

Who hath found
His way to this forbidden ground ?
These lawns, and beds of flowers, and shades,
Of trellice-work in long arcades,
And cirque and crescent framed by wall
Of close clipt foliage, rank and tall.
Converging walks and fountains gay,
And terraces in trim array.
And pine and cedar, spreading wide
Their darksome boughs on either side.

WORDSWORTH.

THE brightness of a clear summer moonlight
fell full upon the rippling waters of the Gulph
of Finland, and glittered upon the turrets and
stately colonnades of the Imperial Palace of
Oranienbaum, standing in conspicuous majesty

on the rising shore. Although a heavy line of shadow was projected by the bastions of the adjoining fortress, yet so steady and intense was the reflection of the moon on the gardens beneath, that the flowers, instead of assuming the ghastly and spectral hue peculiar to moonlight scenery, were distinguishable in their bright varieties of bloom.

All was clear and distinct as at noon-day. But the tinkling of the fountains was silent, the song of the birds hushed;—no gaudy butterfly or swarm of ephemeral insects hovered over those gorgeous flower-beds;—nor did the flapping wings of the sea-fowl, uprising from the adjoining marshes, direct their heavy flight towards the lake of Ladoga. The measured tramp of the sentinels, as they traversed with mechanical steps the base of a flight of marble steps ascending to the entrance of the palace, with an occasional challenge at the approach of coming footsteps, bore witness to the anxious vigilance befitting the dead of night in the purlieus of the courts of kings.

The illustrious inhabitant of the Palace of Oranienbaum, to whom this homage of watchfulness was dedicated, would gladly, however, have dispensed with the ceremonial. A faithless wife,—a caballing subject,—Catherine, Grand Duchess of Holstein, would have rejoiced to exchange the pride, pomp, and circumstance of empty state by which she was surrounded more in espionage than respect, for such freedom of word and action as might have facilitated her intercourse with the discontented courtiers of her kinswoman, the Empress Elizabeth; or her interviews with the object of her lawless affections. The crown of Muscovy had been too often won and lost by the machinations of conspiracy and the rash daring of individuals, not to stimulate the restless craving of the Grand Duchess for that auspicious hour of Imperial anointment which would convert her from a slave into a sovereign;—emancipating her at once from the despotism of Elizabeth, and the authority of her half imbecile husband.

The lust of power and contempt of all moral

restraint which have since inscribed the name of Catherine II. in the records of history as "the Semiramis of the North," had, in fact, already opened the cabinet of the bride of the Duke of Holstein to the councils of the disaffected, and her boudoir to the soothing whispers of a foreign paramour. Although selected for purposes of secret policy by his kinsmen of the princely house of Czartoryski to represent his native Republic at the Imperial Court, Stanislas Count Poniatofski, young, handsome, gay and brilliant, had soon lost sight of the objects of his mission amid that waste of luxury and barbaric splendour with which Bestucheff and the artful courtiers of Elizabeth strove to distract her attention from the ruinous state of her finances, and the perplexity of her foreign alliances. Indifferent alike to the interests of the House of Saxony and the aspiring projects of his own family, Count Poniatofski seemed anxious to resign to his diplomatic competitors the tedious privileges and pretensions of their vocation ;—content to shine in the brilliant festivals of Peterhof

as the most accomplished cavalier of the court; to appear at the *courses au traineau* (performed by torch-light over the snow) as the attendant of the most brilliant sledge and fairest lady; to bear away the palm at ball and banquet, masque, and pageant, joust, and *carrousel*; to lead the Polonaise through the brilliant saloons of the winter palace, or dazzle the ears of the gorgeous beauties of St. Petersburg with Voltaire's last epigram, or the brilliant sallies of his friend and ally, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams.

Such were the ostensible objects of the young Pole. But the triumph of his vanity excited almost as much jealousy among the minions of Elizabeth, as the exercise of his ambition might have created among his patrons at the court of Warsaw; and the new Duke of Courland (Prince Charles of Saxony, son to the King of Poland) made no secret of his dissatisfaction at the popularity of the aspiring diplomat. Already was the fatal influence of Russia so ascendant over the destinies of Poland, that its two last sovereigns had been avowedly indebted to the

intrigues of the Imperial Court for their election to the throne ; and on the protection of the reigning Empress, Augustus III. still grounded his expectations of rendering the crown of the Jagellons hereditary in the House of Saxony. But a suspicion had recently arisen in the mind of Prince Charles that, instead of forwarding these views of the king his master which he was expressly delegated to uphold, Count Poniatofski was intent on acquiring and engrossing the personal favour of Elizabeth and her ministers. He was aware that the citizens of the Republic were eager to secure the election of one of their own Magnats, — a Czartoryski, — a Branicki, — or a Radzivil, — to the throne of the great Sobieski ; — and it was by no means impossible that the Count who, previous to his diplomatic appointment and as the mere guest of the British Ambassador, had been admitted to the honour of a place at the table of the Empress, might hope to turn the scale of Imperial influence in his own favour.

The attention of the coteries of Warsaw had

long been directed towards the destinies of Stanislas Poniatofski. At the period of the young Count's appointment and departure from Poland; a trivial circumstance, magnified into importance by the mysticism prevalent at the Saxon Court; had produced considerable excitement among the Polish aristocracy. It happened that in the ceremonial of his investment with the national order of the White Eagle, the star appropriated to sovereigns (bearing the device "Pro fide, grege, lege," instead of "Pro fide, rege, lege," as worn by the knights,) was accidentally bestowed upon the young Envoy;—and although, on discovering the error, the insignia were re-demanded by Count Brühl, the Chancellor of the order, the occurrence was regarded by the family of Augustus, as one of evil omen; and of most auspicious augury by the houses of Poniatofski and Czartoryski.

But even if uninfluenced by this coincidence, the favour with which Stanislas was openly protected by the Grand Duchess of Holstein, wife to the heir-presumptive, on whom the future

fortunes of Poland and of his own family were likely to depend, was well calculated to provoke the suspicions of the Duke of Courland. Catherine, it is true, was no favourite with the Empress. Certain sympathies of disposition had opened the eyes of Elizabeth to her love of power and pleasure. It was her will and policy that the heir to the throne and his young Duchess should mingle but sparingly in the diversions of the capital;—while the existence of Prince Ivan, grandson to Peter the Great, was prolonged in miserable imprisonment, only to render the Duke of Holstein and his wife more miserably dependent on her capricès. Personal jealousy also,—jealousy of the youthful beauty of Catherine,—was supposed to have its share in her Imperial Majesty's disinclination to admit Duke and Duchess to the participation in the splendid festivities of Peterhoff; and the fair complexion and graceful person of the young German were said to be as unacceptable to the eyes of the infirm and bloated Empress, as the masculine energies of her bold but intriguing

spirit to Razumofski and his satellites. But although the life of the future Emperor and his bride was one of comparative seclusion, there were certain state occasions,—such as the galas held on the Imperial birth-day,—when the ostentatious vanity of Elizabeth overcame even her antipathies;—when the satisfaction of seeing the inheritors of her power humbly kneeling at her foot-stool arrayed in the splendours vouchsafed by her heartless munificence, induced her to parade the homage of the Duke and Duchess of Holstein in presence of the Boyars of her Court. To know that her foot was upon the neck of those whom a word of her lips might elevate to the glories of autocracy or plunge into the depths of a dungeon, consoled her for the spectacle of the resplendent fairness and striking dignity of her nephew's bride!—

It was on one of these occasions,—(a gorgeous birth-night ball, which assembled in the illuminated halls of the winter palace of St. Petersburg the diplomatic representatives of every nation of Europe, and the gorgeous envoys of

various Asiatic princes to vie with the adulation of the haughty but abject Boyars of Muscovy,) that Catherine, attended by her lady in waiting and favourite maid of honour,—the Princesses Daszkoff and Axinia Dolgorucki,—appeared on an especial invitation from Elizabeth in the courtly throng. Wearied by the subjection to which she was condemned, or piqued perhaps by the sarcasms with which the rumours of court malice assured her that Prince Charles of Saxony and others were in the habit of gratifying the Empress at her expense, the Grand Duchess resolved for once to lay aside her usual policy, and brave all hazards of exasperating the superannuated coquette. Instead of conforming to the tasteless costume of the day, with its formalities of hoop and powder, or to the national uniform habitually worn by Elizabeth, the Grand Duchess entered the ball-room arrayed in a flowing robe of pearly satin; her auburn hair falling in natural curls on her shoulders;—her head encircled by a wreath of diamonds, the marriage gift of her mother the Princess of Anhalt-Zerbst; and her

white draperies looped up by a solitaire of matchless beauty, a present from the Empress.

A general murmur of admiration arose among the brilliant assemblage, as the Grand Chamberlain formally preceded her Highness towards the throne under which Elizabeth was seated ; and it was doubtful only whether the involuntary exclamations of delight thus infringing all rules of courtly etiquette (as the Duchess, assuming the respectful demeanour of a subject, advanced towards the throne, through a crowd of uniforms and robes of silver and gold)—were lavished exclusively on the dignified Catherine, or shared by the trembling, blushing Axinia, who was compelled to follow bearing the train of her mistress.

Even the Grand Duchess, dauntless as she was, seemed for a moment fluttered by the withering sneer with which Elizabeth, having received her compliments bad her arise from her knees, —and found the attention of the circle engrossed by her singular costume ;—the men all terror lest their admiration, becoming dan-

gerously apparent, should draw upon them the destiny of the exiled Soltikof.—

“You are come here, Madam, I conclude to dance!” said the Empress with a sarcastic glance at her dress. “We have been accustomed to see the baladins and mimes of our French ballet altered in a manner equally characteristic. Your Highness will oblige me by opening the ball. Prince Schuvaloff!” she continued addressing the Chamberlain, whose golden key trembled under the asperity of the Imperial frown,—“A minuet o r the Duchess of Holstein!”—

At any other time, the vain and self-possessed Catherine would have gloried in the prospect of an exhibition calculated to fix the eyes of the whole court upon her person;—for she danced with dignity and grace, and was pre-assured of the suffrage of the spectators. But standing there, a mark for the scorn of the scorner, a woman, unsupported by the esteem of her husband, a Princess, defrauded of the common privileges of her rank,—she had the mortification of perceiving by the ironical waive of the Duke of

Courland's head in reply to a whisper from the Grand Chamberlain, that he who, by precedence of rank *ought* to have been her partner, peremptorily declined the honour. The indignity brought tears of wounded pride into her eyes;—her colour went and came;—and the panting of her bosom was perceptible, even through her diamond zone. But this perturbation was more propitious to her cause than she was aware of. Amid that display of feminine emotion, her delicate loveliness became a thousand times more lovely; and the minions of the Empress were more vexed than surprised when, after a moment's conference with the Grand Chamberlain, Count Poniatofski the new representative of Poland stepped forward, and (with a graceful and reverential obeisance to the young Princess, worthy the grandson of Princess Czartoryska and the disciple of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams,) took the hand of the trembling Duchess, to lead her to the centre of a space left open before the Imperial throne. Having again bowed humbly to his illustrious

partner, the orchestra, accepting the signal, poured forth its spirit-stirring strains.—

With the eyes of the vindictive Empress and four hundred jealous courtiers fixed upon their movements, it is not to be supposed that the young couple, whose beauty of person, grace of deportment and splendour of attire were worthy some fairy prince and princess of romance, found a single moment for a word of communication. But when, in the concluding movement of the minuet, they approached each other for the parting salutation, Catherine contrived to pour the effulgence of her bright blue eyes full upon her gallant cavalier. The tears of her mortification, scarcely yet dry upon those silken lashes, tended to impart a sweeter and more womanly expression to the smile of grateful admiration with which she strove to repay his chivalrous devotion. The young Duchess was fully able to appreciate the moral courage and self-sacrifice which had braved, in her favour, the malignant spirit of her Imperial kinswoman; and if ever the passing glance of woman's eye succeeded

in revealing the fervour of wakening sympathy, it was that which caused the heart of Poniatofski to beat and his hand to tremble, as he reverentially uncovered his head at the conclusion of the minuet, to lead his accomplished partner to her place at the right hand of the throne.

From that hour his destinies were decided.—Whether the heraldic blunder touching the star of the White Eagle or the momentous minuet had greater share in his eventual elevation to the throne of Poland, Moore or Matthew Lansberg, or some other cunning expositor of celestial influences, must determine. But nothing could be more evident to the Court and courtiers than that his sudden but daily increasing favour with the grand Duchess of Holstein, arose from the spirited movement which first pointed out his fine person and elegant address to her attention; and that the aversion of the Duke of Courland was augmented in a proportionate degree. His officious zeal was even supposed to have directed the notice of Elizabeth to the growing tenderness of

the imprudent lovers; while others asserted that, following a more direct course, he had communicated at once to his royal father his suspicions that the Warszawian Envoy was making interest with the future Empress in support of ambitious projects fatal to those of the house of Saxony. But the result was manifest to all, in the speedy appointment of a successor to his diplomatic honours:—

If gratitude had originally softened the heart of the Grand Duchess towards Stanislas Poniatofski, the rashness of unbridled passion now induced her to humble herself before her potent enemy, the Duke of Courland.—Rushing to the palace of the Saxon Prince, she threw herself at his feet, beseeching his intercession with the Empress and his mediation with Augustus.—But the more eager her supplications, the stronger grew the resolve of Courland to remove her dangerous paramour. Trusting to the mutability of a woman's,—a *fallen* woman's predilections,—he entertained little doubt that Count Po-

niatofski at Warsaw or Dresden would be superseded in her tenderness by Count Somebody-else at St. Petersburg; and coldly but courteously announcing that the councils of his royal father were inflexible, and that her protégé must hold himself in readiness for instant departure as bearer of despatches to the King of Poland, Catherine had only to repent her fruitless self-humiliation. Turning the tears in her eyes "to sparks of fire," she registered a vow within her heart of hearts that, when *her* day of triumph should come, the fortunes of Poniatofski,—of Stanislas,—of the beloved,—should rise upon the ruins of the humbled House of Saxony!—

It had been so bright, so transient a dream! —From the hour which surrendered her whole soul to the handsome and accomplished Polander as to the Champion of her wounded pride, till now that he was about to be torn for ever from her sight, she had not allowed herself one moment's pause for deliberation!—It was *she* whose smiles,—whose gracious smiles, and still more

gracious tears,—had revealed to him the secret of her growing attachment:—it was *she* (for what man without such encouragement ventures to profane the consecrated shrine of a wedded heart, imperial, royal, gentle, or simple?) who insinuated that he might approach nearer, without fear of repulse;—it was *she*,—(shame to her as a woman and a wife!)—who bestowed the key,—taught the watchword,—and bribed the guards and ushers,—to secure from detection his secret visits to the palace of Oranienbaum. Nay, it was even whispered among the coteries of the city that, in the madness of her infatuation, Catherine had one night quitted her husband's palace, alone, unattended, in the depth of winter, to accomplish an assignation with Stanislas, at the hotel of the profligate British Ambassador.*

The Duke of Holstein, meanwhile, despising, detesting or dreading his wife, opposed no obstacle to the arrangements of the Grand Ducal household. Provided he were permitted to enjoy

* Historical.

unmolested his reviews of his Holstein guards, the company of his favourite hayducks and of his mistress, Elisaveta Woronzoff,—it was a matter of indifference to him what ambassador the Court of Poland saw fit to appoint to that of his Imperial and most imperious Aunt:—or what cavaliers the young Duchess,—or Princess Daszkoff,—or the beautiful Axinia Dolgorucki,—chose to admit to their evening circle. He had heard it rumoured among the Jägers and Prussian serjeants with whom he loved to consort, that a foreign officer had been seen to obtain undue access to the palace, and even to the wing inhabited by the Grand Duchess, at unbecoming hours, in an unbecoming manner. But his sole reply to the communication consisted in a chuckling idiotic laugh,—as if he enjoyed the jest raised at his own expense.—

“Take no notice!” whispered he to an officious Jäger, who chose to reiterate the intelligence. “Let the blockhead come and go:—’tis, clearly, no business of yours or mine!”—

It was accordingly surmised among the inferior officers of the establishment that his Highness attributed the furtive visits of the Polish Envoy, to a liaison with one of the ladies of the Duchess's suite. Under the reign of the merciful Elizabeth who, on her accession to the throne, had abolished capital punishments, the public flagellation of the Knout was administered for real or imaginary offences to the fairest and noblest ladies of the Court; and so much mystery was observed in affairs of love or gallantry, that it argued no especial blindness on the part of Peter to infer that the Ambassador of Poland was induced to steal through the gardens of Oranienbaum at midnight in defiance of rain, snow, or thunder-storm, to tender his homage to one of the lovely attendants of the future Empress.—

There were five of them;—all young;—all beautiful;—and we have consequently nothing but the fact to prove that it *was* Catherine herself who, on the occasion already described, unclosed the secret door on the signal of Po-

niatofski's approach ; — and who clasped her hands in agony, as the moonlight-streamed upon the agitated face of her lover, on the fatal night preceding his final departure from St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER II.

With many a lingering look they leave
The spot of guilty gladness past,
And, though they hope and vow, they grieve
To know that parting is the last !
The frequent sigh, the long embrace,
Yet binds them to their trysting place :
But it is come—and they must part,
In fearful heaviness of heart,
With all the deep and shuddering chill,
That follows fast the deeds of ill !

BYRON.

THE last farewell of the guilty pair already hovered on their lips. Already the Grand Duchess had appended by a costly chain to the neck of Stanislas her miniature set in brilliants, ornamented with a tress of her beautiful

auburn hair. Still, he lingered and lingered :—still Catherine, overwhelmed by their approaching separation, indulged in floods of bitter tears ; wringing her hands in despair, and exclaiming that her enemies were victorious,—that she was about to lose her first and only friend !

“ They shall rue it ! ”—she cried, suddenly drying her cheeks, and rising with vehemence from the gorgeous sofa on which she had been reclining. “ My day of triumph will come :—I know it,—I feel it !—Nature would not have put this energetic spirit into my bosom for other than mighty purposes. The tiara of the Tzars shall shine upon my brows as it never yet shone on those of the barbarous princes of Muscovy. Distant nations shall admit its supremacy ; and from the Baltic to the Caspian, the exulting Boyars of Russia shall know what it is to live under the rule of a sovereign who would be feared as well as loved. The acclamations of new provinces and conquered kingdoms shall be heard in honour of Catherine :—commercial cities shall arise to adorn her empire ;—and the prosperity

of an unnumbered population accredit the wisdom of her government. But it is not *these* alone will rejoice her soul and compensate her early privations. No!—Stanislas, no!—In the day of my triumph, in the day of my pride, I shall bend my ear amid the pæans of my people, to the feeble wailing of the crushed and ruined House of Saxony. So surely as I live and breathe,—so surely as I now clasp your hand within my own,—Charles of Courland shall grovel in the dust at my feet; and you, even you, ascend the throne misgoverned by his father.—My picture hangs upon your bosom, Stanislas,—the picture of a Princess who has loved and been beloved as a woman, in extinction of all barriers of rank or duty placed by fate between our hearts;—and by that pledge of tenderest confidence, I swear to you that Stanislas Poniatofski and none other shall reign in Poland, when Catherine—as the wife or widow of a Tzar,—ascends the Imperial throne!—My word and faith upon the promise!” And seizing a pen from the golden standish by her side, she hastily traced on a slip of paper a

solemn confirmation of her declarations, which she delivered folded into the hands of the startled Stanislas.

The heightened colour suffusing her cheek, arms, neck,—the glance of energy amounting almost to inspiration in her eyes,—attested the sincerity of her soul; and Stanislas, kneeling at her feet, imprinted alternately a kiss of gratitude upon the fair hand extended towards him, and upon the effigy of its illustrious possessor, which he drew forth anew from his bosom to deposit in the golden case a record of her vow. But his air, attitude and tone, were those of the successful courtier rather than of the impassioned lover; and policy, *not* tenderness, suggested the fluent expressions of his gratitude. Even amid the endearments lavished upon him by Catherine, his eye wandered restlessly around, and his ear was on the watch for some distant sound. It could not be *fear* that distracted his mind at such a crisis;—for Poniatofski had preserved throughout the enervation of a court existence the dauntless and

characteristic bravery of his race and country. It could not be dread of detection in his intercourse with the wife of the Duke of Holstein; for twelve months of unmolested security left them nothing to apprehend. No!—it was that the heart was wanting in his guilty homage to the future Empress;—that he had worshipped her as a shrine whence the favours of fortune might be dispensed, not cherished her as the object of a true and fervent affection. He was not indifferent,—he did not despise the partner of his illicit pleasures:—as a gallant of the Williams' school he was gratified by her preference, or perhaps as a man of chivalrous feelings appreciating the extent of the sacrifice made in his favour, was even grateful for her love. But no tears arose in *his* eyes;—no tremulous emotion suspended the utterance of *his* gratitude;—*the heart*—the heart was wanting!—Rarely are sighs of fond and intimate regard breathed beneath a roof whose gilded fretwork casts its brilliant reflections on glowing tapestry and draperies of rich brocade, such as the chamber

where the Duchess of Holstein received the parting homage of her friend. Love (like certain flowers that refuse to blossom within the walls of cities,) delights in the free air,—the sunshine or the shade. A legitimate child of nature, it languishes at a distance from the maternal bosom!—

Nor could Catherine, the shrewdest and most penetrating of human beings, fail to notice the abstraction betrayed by the Count; and under any other circumstances, she would have traced it to its true origin. But women who renounce the virtues of their sex seem to be retributively bereft of its instincts; and the votary of ambition and licentious pleasures read only in the anxious countenance of Poniatofski his sympathy in her denunciation of vengeance against the House of Saxony, and grief that the hour of parting was at hand.—For once, the jealousy of female nature was overpowered by the still louder suggestions of the intrigante. Nay! so complete was her illusion, that *she* was the first to urge his departure,—to unclosethe the secret door,—to place in his hand

the purse of roubles prepared to requite the silence of the sentinels on duty;—and, as she drew aside the damask draperies of the window of her chamber, to watch the distant form of Stanislas stealing along the gardens in the shade of its commanding ramparts,—while an occasional gleam of moonlight fell upon those ornaments of his uniform which not even his pelisse of sables could wholly conceal,—she hastily dashed away her tears, lest she should lose sight of that beloved object one moment before the projecting buttress of the last platform shut him out for ever.

“He is gone,—and I am alone in the world!”—was the involuntary exclamation of the Duchess, as she buried her dishevelled head in the golden cushions of her gorgeous canopy; “but those who have *made* me lonely shall rue the deed;—ay!—even unto death,—even unto desolation!”—

Far different were the emotions with which Stanislas,—emerging from the perfumed and stifling atmosphere of the illuminated chambers of the palace,—hailed the fresh breezes of night

as they fanned his flushed and beating brows. A sensation of relief,—of release from a false and unnatural position,—already gladdened the pulses of his heart. Catherine had pledged herself to the performance of more than all he had ever ventured to anticipate from her influence; and his career of splendid servitude was at an end. Having attained the spot, the well-known spot, where the apartments of the Grand Duchess would be hidden from his view, he turned suddenly; and as she had fondly anticipated, paused to fix a farewell gaze upon its stately walls, and to inhale for the last time the love-breathing fragrance of its delicious gardens. But however exact in her calculations of the movements of the Count, her interpretation of his motives was utterly fallacious. Catherine had already subsided in his memory into the gracious princess, the munificent protectress; and the fair face that hovered before his eyes as he leant for a moment upon the bronze railing of the marble steps, and involuntarily raised his right arm to the sky as if in attestation of an unuttered vow, or enforcement

of a secret benediction,—was that of *another*! younger, lovelier, brighter, better, purer, — the noble countenance of Axinia Dolgorucki.—The habitual and confidential attendant of the Grand Duchess, her mild and modest bearing had captivated his esteem almost as much as the bewitching beauty of her face and figure commanded his admiration; and although the delight with which her presence filled his bosom was prevented, by his peculiar position, from ripening into the glowing impulses of love, Stanislas was frequently moved to consider with regret the ties by which he was restrained from advancing open pretensions to her favour.

These sentiments, heightened by a thousand reminiscences connected with the scene, aggravated the mournful conviction that he should behold her no more; and turning hastily from the spot, he was about to accelerate his footsteps in passing the remaining precincts of the Imperial gardens, when he suddenly stumbled against some dark heavy object, placed in his path evidently for the purpose of obstruction.

“Plague of Heaven!—what is here?”—ejaculated Poniatofski, irresistibly breaking the silence so repeatedly enjoined by the Grand Duchess during his transit of the gardens.—“Go to!—this is neither a spot nor an hour for mummary!” he continued, as the ball which he kicked before before him suddenly unrolled itself to take the distorted shape of a little Kalmuck dwarf, a privileged favourite attached to the Grand Ducal household of Oranienbaum.

“Your Excellency follows the Court fashion of trampling upon the lowly and meek,” replied the harsh croaking voice of Chedzim. “Is it my fault if I am set here by her Highness’s gardener, to watch for the knavish poachers who nightly purloin the golden carp from the fountains, and trample down the blossoms of his parterres?”—

“’Tis false!” said Stanislas angrily; for already he was aware that the crafty dwarf had penetrated the whole secret of his connection with the Grand Duchess, and apprehended that his tongue was to be kept from wagging only by a padlock of gold. “Thou art here, Sirrah, on

thine own eaves-dropping errand ; gathering lying echoes of Court scandal, to make mirth for the Guard-room or profit for thy commerce of calumnies. Away dog ! or I will pitch thee yonder into the lotus-tank, to rot among thy kindred reptiles."

"Courteous lord !" grated the voice of Chedzim, "I cannot but muse how the gentle dames of Warsaw will admire the graces of speech and gesture acquired by his Excellency the faithful minister of the princes of Saxony at our Muscovite court!"—And while uttering this bitter taunt, he gradually advanced and attempted to draw the Count by his pelisse towards a small door in the stone wall they were skirting, which flew open on their approach. The dwarf even attempted to force his companion into a small inner-garden adjoining the bastions which Stanislas knew to be devoted to the use of the Grand Duke ; but, drawing his sword with one hand, and with the other seizing the insignificant abortion of humanity by which he was molested, he mingled threats of summary justice with an

accusation of treason. A moment's reflection on the less than nothingness of the unfortunate creature writhing in his grasp prompted Poniatofski to relax his hold, and content himself with flinging his pigmy adversary at some distance among the flower-beds; and a rapid glance on the small garden, on whose threshold they stood, having convinced him that no enemy lurked within, he was disposed to listen with indulgence, when Chedzim, shaking himself like a dog and stretching his diminutive limbs to the utmost as if to ascertain that they were unfractured by his fall,—once more approached.

“The sword of Goliath drawn upon poor Chedzim!”—cried he, with a sort of ironical laugh. “Chedzim, who might be easily impaled on the golden pin of a certain Count's regal star of the White Eagle, concerning which so many biting jests are prevalent at Court.—Well!—laud we our own credulity, that expected better thanks at the hands of an ungrateful cavalier, for our zeal in conducting him to a rendezvous with the fairest lady of the Court. The Chevalier Williams

would have requited me with a pouch full of guineas for the mere promise of such a service!— But the parting kiss of the Duke of Holstein's wife has turned the brain of our gallant of the Vistula!"

The insinuation thus thrown out by the Tâtar had at least the effect of suspending further chastisement of his insolence. Poniatofski, in the prime of youth and heyday of imprudence, was not yet so paralyzed by the torporific influence of his mercenary ambition, as to remain insensible to the expressions uttered by Chedzim. Hastily overstepping the threshold of the little garden, where bolt and bar were instantly drawn behind him by the dwarf, he found himself in a walled garden; ornamented on one side by extensive aviaries connected with a pavilion, the favourite resort of the moping, desolate Duke of Holstein. All was still. The birds slept upon their perches; the moon-light streamed refulgently through the glass roofing upon the lavish blossoms of the beautiful exotics gathered in varie-

gated pyramids beneath. The crushed leaves of the beds of sweet basil, intersecting the turfen alley he was traversing, seemed to reinvigorate his shattered nerves; and on reaching a sundial of white marble gracing the extremity of the path, he turned suddenly towards Chedzim, and in a milder voice interrogated him touching the mysterious object of his mission.

“She is *there!*”—whispered the dwarf, creeping towards the Count, and lowering his own harsh voice, as if in deference to the presence of some venerated personage; and following the direction implied by his extended fore-finger, Count Poniatofski perceived a muffled female figure, seated on a low stone seat placed against the wall to command a view of the whole garden.

The heart of Stanislas beat quick! Was it a stratagem of his enemies,—an ambuscade of the Duke of Holstein?—No! another moment sufficed to convince him that he had no enemies,—no evil to fear. On his approach, the figure rose, and slowly advanced to greet him; and the pale

face revealed to his wondering admiration, when she drew aside her hood and stood before him cold, earnest, and speechless, in the moon-light;—was that of Axinia Dolgorucki!—

CHAPTER III.

- Myr.* I pray thee do not speak
About my fathers or their land.
- Sar.* Yet oft
Thou speakest of them ?
- Myr.* True ! For constant thought
Will overflow in words unconsciously.
But when another names their name, it wounds me.
- Sar.* How then to save thee as thou sayst ? Explain.
- Myr.* By teaching thee to save thyself, and not
Thyself alone, but those vast realms, from all
The rage of that worst war,—the war of brethren.

SARDANAPALUS.

THE first impulse of Poniatofski was to fall at the feet of the lovely being distinguishing him by so especial a mark of confidence.—

“Nay, kneel not!” faltered a sweet and

well-known voice. "You may find that you have little cause for thanks!—Rise, Count;—I do but pause to gather breath and courage!"—and with hesitating utterance and her hand pressed heavily on her bosom, she stood for a moment as if struggling with her emotions and striving to re-assume her self-possession.—Poniatofski attempted to take her hand, in the hope of calming her agitation; but, repelling the attempt, she stepped back a few paces towards the stone bench, and motioned to him to take his seat beside her. They were now almost alone;—for the dwarf had retired to the brink of one of the tanks, and lay coiled up, urchin-like, on the ground, within sight though not within hearing.—

"By what miracle,—what blessed miracle,—do I see you here?" whispered Stanislas at length, perceiving that his lovely companion was overpowered with embarrassment.

"By no miracle," replied Axinia, in a calmer voice, as the holiness of her purpose gradually surmounted and subdued the tremor of her frame. "I am here of my own free choice, my own

deliberate will,—to speak a few words to the paramour of the Duchess of Holstein ere he depart for that native country where hereafter he is destined to reign, an anointed king.”—

“Hush!”—cried Poniatofski, half starting from his seat, “Would you betray me?—Is this a spot for such accusal?—We may be overheard!”—

“Fear nothing!” said Axinia, pointing anew to his seat. “These high walls abut against the moat of the fortress.—The place is watched. No listeners or spies loiter near. You, my lord, you who for a year’s long space have weekly—nay almost nightly traversed these gardens, are you yet to learn how securely their avenues are guarded by the creatures of the Grand Duchess?—You start!—you tremble to find another so well versed in your movements!—Again I say, fear nothing.—You have neither enemy nor betrayal to dread, save from your own rash weakness.”—

“Judge of my conduct as you will!” replied Stanislas, irritated by the tone of lofty contempt assumed towards him by his lovely companion, “but venture not to decide on its *motives* unless

you are disposed to fairer interpretation.—My concern,—my—my mortification on finding my own proceedings and those of another, (another who should be sacred from your reproaches,) exposed to these harsh allusions, must not be construed into the vile terrors of a poltroon.”—

“Count Poniatofski might know himself secure from imputation on his personal courage,” retorted his companion, “even without the prowess recently exhibited in drawing his weapon on a lady’s page. But no matter!—Resent as you will my freedom of speech, you must bear it. At day-break, you quit this country:—at day-break, that faithful emissary who, having pledged himself to Augustus to support the Saxon interest and to the Czartoryski to uphold his views on the succession, has obtained *for himself*, in guerdon of a criminal attachment, those pledges he undertook to secure for the son of his sovereign—will quit this place for ever.”—

“This is too much!” cried Poniatofski.—

“Is it more or less than truth?”—said Axinia. “No! my lord,—I am not deceived! I,

who from the hour of your arrival at St. Petersburg, have watched your every word, look, thought, action,—*I cannot be misled. Take heed that others may not have been equally penetrating.*”—

Somewhat soothed by this tacit avowal of a partial interest in his favour, Poniatofski was about to enter into a vindication of himself; when in a lower voice his companion resumed her warning.—

“My lord—my lord—” said she, “thank heaven which has better care of you than you deserve, that this recal, so unwelcome to yourself and the Grand Duchess, has saved you from a darker cast of fortune. The eyes of Charles of Courland, her enemy and yours, have long been fixed upon your proceedings. Traitor as he is, *you* have not been less treacherous; and if he have refrained from unmasking to the Empress the secret of your connexion with her niece, it was but that in accusing you of views on the succession of Poland, he feared a premature disclosure of his own.—Bestucheff, the confederate of your

plans is this night arrested and on his way to Siberia; and although your functions as ambassador may preserve you from any overt act of violence, believe me, on the faith of one who has your interests warmly at heart, the slightest imprudence may yet be fatal. Attempt on your return to Warsaw the most seeming-safe communication with this place, and your correspondence will fall into the hands of Courland's emissaries. The wife of the heir-apparent will be plunged into the dungeons of Schlüsselburg;—and for yourself——”

“For myself,—a free-born citizen and soldier, I have little to dread from the Princes of Saxony. But for *her*—I thank you for this timely warning.”

“Enough!—Of her it befits us to speak no further;—to *you* alone I still address a word of premonition. The vigilance of Courland has already betrayed you to the Court of Warsaw. During the king's life, you are scarcely safe in his dominions; and tho' the picture,—the picture of the Duke of Holstein's wife, which now glit-

ters in your bosom, — may seem a sufficient pledge for the accomplishment of your hopes.”—

“Heaven and earth!” ejaculated the Count, —“has nothing escaped you?”—

“Can you,” continued his auditress, unmindful of the interruption, — “*can* you — do you — pin your faith on the firmness of purpose of a passion-governed woman; who would be moved by a single stripe, a single threat, a single frown of the Empress, to betray you; — or by a single smile from a newer lover, — to betray herself?”—

“Ungenerously urged!” cried the Count, with indignation. “Catherine—(may I be forgiven such free use of her illustrious name!)— has a firm and resolute soul; true to her friends, and indulgent—to *her followers*.”—

“Time will put *your* confidence and *her* constancy to the proof. But hereafter ponder on my words when the Duchess of Holstein, the Empress consort, or it may be even Catherine II., shall hear of Stanislas Poniatofski sighing in renewed devotion at the feet of his

fair cousin Calixta, and visits on himself the guilt and folly in which he was the first to involve her"—

"Calixta!" interrupted the Count, still more and more astonished by the insight into his feelings and engagements betrayed by the young Princess. "Deign, Madam, I beseech you to explain by what mystery my most secret fortunes are thus laid bare to the eyes of a stranger?"—

"A stranger!" involuntarily reiterated Axinia. —"Stanislas — Stanislas! — can it be that you have forgotten the playmate of your childhood;—the orphan girl who shared your sports and studies at Pulawy?"

"Forgotten the little wayward nursling of the Princess,—the idol of the whole household,—whom I (a proud boy just escaped from nursing restraints) so loved and so tormented? — But no!" — he continued, interrupting himself — "Xinieszka was the child of my mother's kinswoman,—a Polander,—a country-woman;"—

"I am the child of your mother's kins-

woman,—I too am a Polander, and your country-woman,” interrupted the Princess. “Born during my father’s exile of his clandestine marriage with a daughter of the house of Djalinski, our misfortunes ensured the protection of her noble relative Princess Czartoryska. I drew breath, Stanislas, under the roof of your maternal ancestors: and though my mother survived only to impress upon my young mind the reverence of fond attachment towards *their* country and her own,—yet on my father’s recall from banishment, the anguish of quitting my native land obliterated in my girlish mind all triumph in our new dignities.—Adopted by the Empress, I was commanded to dismiss every recollection of a country connected, according to *her* interpretation, with the misfortunes of my family; and long have I dwelt in Russia, as in a land of strangers,—yearning after the home of my childhood.”—

“And till this hour, you have disdained to impart this precious secret and recal these touching reminiscences!”—cried Stanislas, seizing her

hand. "Why—why defraud me of the mighty accession of happiness I might have derived from your confidence and friendship?"—

"You have proved yourself unworthy of either," replied Axinia withdrawing her hand. "Little can you imagine with what affectionate trust I looked forward to your arrival here! I, whose every thought and feeling centred in the beloved country of my mother; I, who had so often stood aloof from the brilliant throng in the galleries of Peterhoff or the gardens of Oranienbaum to repeat aloud, for the soothing of my own ear, words of the sweet language of my early years;—judge what was my joy in the prospect of reunion with a countryman, a kinsman!—or my mortification when you presented yourself as the accomplished scholar of the profligate Williams—of an avowed atheist,—a noted coward,—and above all, the traducer of my native country.* Talk no more of barbarians or adventurers, had

* Sir C. H. Williams, in his letters to the Hon. Henry Fox, treats of "Sarmachia" as "still uncivilized;" and of the Poles as "*primi barbarorum*."

been my idle vaunt to Princess Daszkoff, in answer to the threadbare jests of the court upon my country and her sons. Stanislas Poniatofski, the offspring of a Czartoryska, is coming hither to vindicate the honour of the countrymen of Sobieski!"—

"And have I then forfeited your pledge?"—inquired the Count in a more subdued tone. "Alas! why did you not deign to forewarn me of the precious interest attached to my proceedings?"

"At our very first meeting," said his fair companion, "the Duchess of Holstein marked you for her own; and I no longer dared to interpose a warning voice. I saw her fix the fascination of her eyes upon your face, and trembled for your safety. Yes! Stanislas!—I trembled;—for I knew not then the changes that time had wrought in the companion of my youth,—that the lessons of the licentious Williams had fallen upon fertile ground,—and that of the two *Catherine* was the greater dupe."

"On my life—my faith,—"

“Pollute not either by a vain denial of the fact!”

“Then why madam, retract even now your harsh opinions,—on the eve, the accursed eve, of my departure?”—

“You were triumphant, and I despised the minion of the Princess;—you are in danger,—and my heart yearns anew towards my playmate of Pulawy.”—

“My *life* then is still worthy care and preservation at your hands?”—

“It is—it is!—for to *you* will one day be confided the destinies of my country. To you, it will be given to render the judgment seat of Sobieski a tribunal of righteousness, whence freedom, and civilization to ennoble freedom, may be dispensed to the *people* of Poland;—and to its *nobles*, pursuits worthy of their emulation, and compensations great as the deservings of virtue. And yet, Stanislas,—when I recal to mind your subjection to that Godless man,—when I think of your friendship with *him*—your connection with *her*,—

your love of ostentatious pleasures, — your enervation of mind and body” —

“Misjudge me not!” cried Poniatofski: “should I indeed live to achieve the sovereignty of my native country, (and it is the birthright of her nobles to regard that distinction as open to the efforts of virtue or valour) I will write the name of “POLSKA” higher among the nations of Europe than it was inscribed by the brave Sobieski, or the great Casimir. It has been, — why should I deny it? — the dream of my ambition to elevate the power and equalize the rights of her citizens; — to break the chains of her bondsmen, and extend and adorn her dominions.” —

“The time may come when I shall recal that promise to your mind,” cried Axinia, her heart swelling as he spoke. “Look to the sky, Stanislas! — There is nothing between us and the omniscient presence of God! — He hears you, — your words are recorded! — The will whose government imports the well-being of a mighty nation cannot be of poor account in the sight of Heaven. Trifle not, then, with the greatness of your destiny.

Resign not your better energies in the enervation of a life of pleasure. Avoid the feeble and dishonoured court of Augustus. Study the fortunes and records of other nations,—the philosophy of their laws,—the balance of their rights; and when indeed the minion of Catherine of Holstein shall become sovereign of Poland”—

A shrill whistle interrupted her apostrophe; and the beautiful countenance which, upturned in its purity towards the pure moonlight, might have personified the inspired loveliness of Faith, was suddenly transfixed with horror.

“The garden is surrounded,—they break the door!” cried Chedzin who, bounding like a ball along the path, was already by her side.

“For *your* sake, rather than for mine, I must not be found here,” cried Poniatofski. “Said you not that this wall overhangs the moat of the fortress?”—

“The channel is deep and dangerous,” cried Axinia, “and guarded by the Holsteiners!—It is too late!”—

“Nay, nay,” cried the dwarf. “The iron

bolts shoot deep into the granite door-case; and 'tis a task for a catapult to break through the iron-studded oak. We have ample time, Sir Count!" he continued leaping on the stone bench. "Be pleased to make your first step upon the shoulders of the eaves-dropping miscreant. Far better hazard breaking your neck to reach the parapet, or drowning by a plunge into the moat, than brave the wrath of her highness the Duchess, or his lowness the Duke. Up!—mount!—begone!—there is life and death in delay."—

"I go,"—said Poniatofski, seizing the trembling hands of Axinia, and pressing them to his heart. "Will you not breathe one kinder word of farewell?"—

"Heaven's blessings and guardianship be upon you;—and for our country's sake—think upon the words of Axinia!" faltered the young Princess.—

"St. Vladimir send you understanding," cried Chedzim, stamping on the stone bench. "Is this a time to be bandying sentiment, when lever and

mallet are at the door hinge, and knout, hayduck and janizary, in waiting?"

The jangling of Poniatofski's accoutrements drowned the remainder of his harangue: while lightly springing from his shoulders, the Count cautiously and laboriously ascended the wall.

"A caïque is moored to the stump of a willow at the extremity of the bastion!" cried the dwarf, when looking up, he saw the Count overstep the coping of the parapet. "I have used it myself, before now, on a moon-light night, without obstruction from guard or battery."

"Hush!" cried Axinia, listening in motionless horror for the splash of water caused by the Count's descent; "Be still, listen!—listen!"—

But her caution was unavailing!—At that moment, the voice of Chedzim, and the further movements of the fugitive, were drowned in a sudden crash, announcing that the intruders had forced a violent entry; and in an instant, some eight or a dozen soldiers, bearing torches and headed by the Captain of the Guard, proceeded to search the garden,—pricking with sword and

bayonet the shrubs and thickets; but for which manifestation of their zeal, it is probable that the terrified Chedzim might have sought refuge among the bushes from their investigation. Axinia, on the contrary, advanced with dignified self-possession towards the dial, with a view of attracting their attention.

“What means this outrage, Captain Mirovitz?”—she inquired of the young officer, by whom she was surveyed with a smile of significant expression. “Whom did you expect to find in a spot dedicated exclusively to their Highnesses’ pleasure, that you make this violent inbreak?—If it be myself of whom you are in search, surely it had been easier to reach the garden through the colonnade,—the conservatory,—the pavilion,—the gallery leading from the ball-room,—all which I left open on my way hither from the palace.

“It was *not* yourself, Madam, whom her Imperial Highness commissioned me to seek; or I should not have presumed to bring my men with loaded arms into the presence of the Princess Dolgorucki. I knew not, indeed, that the

ladies of the household were rash or heroic enough to hazard themselves in this lonely place at the dead of night, with no better temptation than a gleam of chilly moon-light, or more efficient protection than a thing like this." And fixing the point of the sword into the gorgeous sash of the dwarf, the young officer swung him forward, regardless of a slight shriek indicative of physical agony.

"The ladies of the household conceive no grounds for alarm within the precincts of a palace so carefully guarded as that of Oranienbaum. Another time, however, I will be careful to apprise the Marshal of the household of my choice of time and place for exercise, lest again I cause needless alarm and trouble to the officer on duty."

With a formal curtesy of acknowledgment, and affecting a degree of self-possession belied by the paleness of her cheek, and the intonation of her voice, Axinia was about to proceed towards the conservatory, through which she purposed returning to the palace; when Mirovitz, startled

by her assumed dignity into the tone of respect with which he was accustomed to treat a lady of such honour and distinction, stepped forward to interrupt her.

“Your excellency must pardon me!” said he, firmly. “I have her Highness’s commands to conduct, under guard of arrest to her presence, the individual or individuals found lurking in the palace gardens. The pavilion door is reserved for the use of the Duke and Duchess. You will be pleased to accompany me through the gardens towards the grand entrance.”

“Lurking?”—reiterated Axinia, somewhat touched by the insinuation. “Return, Sir, to the palace; and say that you found only the Princess Dolgorucki, attended by a page of the household, enjoying the summer atmosphere.”

“Is it to her Excellency, or to the page of the household, I am to restore this pelisse?”—inquired Mirovitz, pointing to that which Poniatofski had cast off, to enable him to ascend the wall; and which was at this moment discovered and brought forward by one of the guards. “By our lady

of Casan ! 'tis yet warm ;—the wearer cannot be far distant.”—

“Take it, Chedzim,” said Axinia, recovering the presence of mind from which she had been for a moment startled, and eager to prevent further investigation. “Lead on, Sir, to the palace. I follow you.—All further explanations must be made to the Grand Duchess.”

END OF VOL. II.

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